

ia



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

AN
IMPARTIAL HISTORY
OF
IRELAND,

FROM THE PERIOD OF THE ENGLISH
INVASION TO THE PRESENT TIME.

FROM AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS.

BY DENNIS TAAFFE.



VOL. IV.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY J. CHRISTIE, 16, ROSS-LANE.

1811.



AN
IMPARTIAL HISTORY
OF
IRELAND.

FROM THE PERIOD OF THE ENGLISH INVASION
TO THE PRESENT TIME.

THE desire of Anne, that her brother should succeed to the crown, was most advantageous to Louis XIV. Peace, as advantageous to France as the queen could obtain, was concluded. Oxford, whose deception to the Jacobites was discovered, was removed; a new ministry appointed; but, four days after his dismissal, their views were frustrated, by the death of Anne, on the 12th of August, 1714. Agreeable to the act of succession, George I. son of Ernest Augustus, elector of Brunswick, and of Sophia, grand-daughter of James I. was proclaimed king of Great-Britain and Ireland. The schemes in favour of the Pretender were discovered. Oxford, who had frustrated the design, was sent to the Tower. Bolinbroke and Ormond escaped to France.

Parliament met at Dublin, in November 1715. His majesty's title to the crown was zealously recognized. The late ministers of the queen were voted enemies to the succession. The justices acquainted them that the kingdom was to be invaded. The commons addressed his majesty,

DA.
910
T 11 i
V. 4

expressed their abhorrence of the design, and their zeal and affection for his person and government.

Meanwhile the earl of Mar, who had been secretary of state for Scotland in the reign of queen Anne, and lieutenant-general Hamilton, sailed from London, by direction of the Pretender, and landed in the north of Scotland. He assembled his friends and vassals, and proclaimed the Pretender. A great number of highlanders and principal noblemen having joined him, he marched forward and seized upon the town of Perth, by which means he was master of all that part of Scotland which is beyond the river Tay.

Some officers had, at the same time, attempted to surprise the castle of Edinburgh, which would have made Marr master of all, and would have obliged his enemies to quit the post of Stirling; but this project failed. As soon as king George was informed of the revolt of Marr, he sent the duke of Argyll from London, who, without stopping at Edinburgh, advanced to Stirling with all the troops he could collect, which did not amount to more than fifteen hundred men. George I. at the same time, caused some regiments to march from England into Scotland, and gave orders that several should be brought over thither from Ireland; he also sent to demand of the States general the six thousand men they were bound to give by the treaties made by the late king, in favour of the protestant succession.

Marr, in the mean time, amused himself with forming his army, and settling all his affairs, as

if he was sure of having all the time he wanted. Had he marched forward as soon as he had collected eight or ten thousand men, he certainly would not have met with any opposition, and Argyll would have been obliged to quit Scotland, to retire to Berwick. He might then have been able to put his army in order, to assemble a parliament, and to march to the frontiers, either to defend them against king George's troops, or to advance into England, and join the friends of the Pretender, in case they should form a party there, as there was reason to expect; but his little skill in military affairs made him lose this opportunity, and he gave time to the troops that were marching from all quarters to join the duke of Argyll. A man may have a great deal of understanding, a great deal of personal bravery, and be a very able minister, without having the talents requisite for an enterprize of this nature. It is certain that Marr had them not; and we must not therefore wonder that he did not succeed. After he had drawn the sword, he did not know in what manner to proceed.

Soon after Marr had seized upon Perth, M. Forester, a respectable gentleman in the county of Northumberland, the lords Derwentwater, Widrington and others, took up arms there, and proclaimed the Pretender; but their principal force consisting in cavalry, they asked of Marr a reinforcement of infantry; upon which he detached brigadier M'Intosh, to join them with eighteen hundred highlanders. M'Intosh passed the Firth, near Edinburgh, in spite of

some ships of war, which happened to be there; and instead of marching the nearest way to join Forester he drew near to Edinburgh. The Duke of Argyll hastened thither from Stirling, and M'Intosh retired into an old ruined fort, called Leith, at a mile distance from the town; he would not have been able to maintain his ground there for want of provisions, if the duke of Argyll had not been obliged to return immediately to Stirling, to oppose Marr, who was marching thither. As soon as M'Intosh was relieved from the situation he had foolishly got himself into, he made what haste he could towards the frontiers of England; and was joined in his way by the lords Kenmure, Nithsdale, &c. with five hundred horse from the south of Scotland; but he lost a great number of his highlanders, who went back into their own country. After they had all joined, Forester, instead of marching directly into Scotland, to attack Argyll on one side, while Marr attacked him on the other, which was the only wise step they could take, they advanced into the bishoprick of Durham, having some hopes that the town of Newcastle would declare for them; but general Carpenter having got there before them, and having posted himself with one battalion and some dragoons, they took the road towards Lancashire, where their army was increased by numbers of catholics. They advanced as far as Preston, thinking that the neighbouring counties would also take up arms; but general Wills, whom king George had sent there, having got together some infan-

try, with several regiments of cavalry and dragoons, marched straight to them, and arrived near Preston, before they had the least intelligence of it. They put themselves in a posture of defence, and even repulsed the troops vigorously in their first attacks, so that considering the superiority of Forester, and the few troops Wills had with him, it is probable the latter would have been, if not defeated, at least obliged to retire; but all of a sudden Forester, and most of the chiefs of his party, losing their presence of mind, offered to capitulate. Gen. Wills conducted the matter so well, that they submitted at discretion, being satisfied with the assurances he gave them, of employing his good offices in their favour. Forester had with him about two thousand men, and Wills not more than one thousand at most.

In the mean while Marr, after having amused himself a long time at Perth, began his march to attempt the passage of the river Tay, above Stirling. Argyll being apprised of it, marched up to him, and they met at Auchterardire. Marr's army might consist of nine or ten thousand men, and that of Argyll of three or four thousand.

Argyll, at first, broke the left of Marr's army, but the latter totally routed the rest of the enemy's forces, of whom he made a considerable slaughter; but he did not pursue them, and suffered Argyll, with his right wing, to retire in good order to Stirling.* The next day, instead of availing himself of his advantage, he marched

* Berwick's Memoirs.

back to Perth. From thence he detached the marquises Huntly and Seaforth, with five or six thousand of their vassals, to retake Inverness. But Huntly accepted pardon, and Seaforth retired.

After an interval of two months from the commencement of this rebellion, the Pretender landed at Peterhead, towards the end of December. Instead of an army of 16,000 men, that he expected, he found but 5 or 6000, in the most wretched state. Argyll, notwithstanding the season of the year, advanced; the highlanders retreated; and the Pretender, having witnessed the failure of the attempt, with Marr, and a few others, embarked for France, leaving their wretched followers to shift for themselves.

The Irish parliament offered a reward for the Pretender, and attainted the duke of Ormond; stating to his majesty, that it was with the utmost concern they found that this country gave birth to James Butler, late duke of Ormond; a person who, in despite of his allegiance, and the obligations of repeated oaths, has been one of the chief authors and fomenters of that wicked and unnatural rebellion. They also unanimously voted him guilty of high-treason; his estate to be vested in the crown; and that a reward of ten thousand pounds should be offered for apprehending him, in case he landed in any part of Ireland. So that he, who, in 1704, had been addressed by them with particular marks of love and veneration, on account of his having procured The barrier to the protestant religion, as

the law then passed against the catholics was called, now became the public object of their aversion and contempt. But, indeed, what better could they have expected from a person, who, regardless of public faith, and the articles of the capitulation of Limerick, had procured to be enacted, a penal statute, through which there runs such a vein of ingenious cruelty, that it seems to be dictated rather by some prætor of Dioclesian, than by a British or Irish nobleman? It was a singular circumstance in this duke's fortune, that although in his expedition on the coast of Spain, his soldiers committed many outrages, and profanations of what was held sacred by the inhabitants; yet, after the bill of attainder had passed against him, he fled for protection to that country, where he had connived at the sacrilegious excesses of his army; and afterwards retired to Avignon, a territory belonging to the first prelate of that church, which he had treated with so much cruelty.

Though the acting rebels were almost all Scottish presbyterians, and none of the catholics in Ireland were known to be any way connected with them, yet such was the government's affected fear, or real hatred, of these catholics, that the penalties for the exercise of their religion were now generally inflicted. Their chapels were shut up; their priests dragged from their hiding places; sometimes from the very altars, in the midst of divine service; hurried into loathsome prisons, and from thence banished for ever from their native country. This persecution was

the obvious, and but the natural effect of a resolution of the commons at this juncture; ' that it was the indispensable duty of all magistrates, to put the laws in immediate execution against popish priests; and that such of them as neglected to do so, should be looked upon as enemies of the constitution. And although this rebellion of the presbyterians in Scotland was the sole pretence for this severity; and the very same law which banishes popish priests, prohibits also dissenters to accept of, or act by, a commission in the militia or array; yet so partial were the resolutions of that parliament, that, at the same time that they ordered the former to be rigorously prosecuted, they resolved unanimously, that any person, who should commence a prosecution against any of the latter, who had accepted, or should accept of, a commission in the array or militia, was an enemy to king George and the protestant interest. Thus of the only two main objects of the same law, its execution against one of them was judged highly meritorious; but it was deemed equally culpable even to attempt it against the other; though the law itself makes no difference between them. Such was the justice and consistency of our legislators of that period.*

Irish catholics might now assume a title similar to that assumed by the pope. He styles himself the servant of the servants of God; they were the slaves of the slaves of England. The protestant negro drivers of Irish catholics did not, it seems, perceive, that the penal laws against

* Hist. Rev. Civil Wars of Ireland.

catholics were also penal against Ireland; and that the infamous acts to prevent the growth of popery, were equally operative to prevent the growth of Ireland's prosperity. Indulging their unchristian hatred of the elder branch of christianity, and of its professors; and pleased with the exercise of a petty, subordinate tyranny, they appear to have been generally insensible of the chains they wore, in common with their other countrymen. But, in 1719, the English parliament made their slavery evident.

A cause, relative to an estate betwixt Hester Sherlock and Maurice Annesly, was tried before the court of exchequer in Ireland. The latter obtained a decree, which upon appeal was reversed by the lords. From their sentence Annesly appealed to the English peers, by whom the judgment given in his favour by the court of exchequer was confirmed, and an order issued to put him in possession of the disputed estate. Against this illegal determination, Sherlock petitioned the Irish house of lords. The lords proposed to the consideration of the judges, whether, by the laws of the land, an appeal lies from a decree of the court of exchequer in Ireland, to the king in parliament in Great Britain? The judges answered in the negative. The peers then resolved, that they would support their honour, jurisdiction and privileges, by giving the petitioner, Hester Sherlock, effectual relief, pursuant to a former order. Notwithstanding, some time after a petition was presented to the house, by Alexander Burrowes, sheriff of Kildare, setting forth,

that his predecessor in office had put Hester Sherlock in possession of the premises. That upon his entering into office, an injunction, agreeably to an order of the English peers, issued from the exchequer, commanding him to restore Maurice Annesly to the possession of the above-mentioned lands; that not daring to act in contradiction to the order of the house, he was fined. That in consequence of this, being afraid lest he should be taken into custody, he durst not venture to come in to pass his accounts, for which he was fined twelve hundred pounds.

The lords resolved, that Alexander Burrowes, Esq. in not obeying the injunction issued from his majesty's court of exchequer, in the cause betwixt Sherlock and Annesly, has behaved himself with integrity and courage, and with due respect to the orders and resolutions of the house. That the fines imposed upon him be taken off. That the lord chief barons of the exchequer, in the cause betwixt Sherlock and Annesly, and also respecting the sheriff of Kildare, had acted in manifest derogation to and diminution of the king's prerogative, of finally judging in his high court of parliament in Ireland, as also of the rights and privileges of this kingdom and its parliaments. They also ordered the barons into custody; and, in vindication, drew up a representation to be presented to his majesty.

In it they represented, that by many ancient records and sundry acts of parliament it appeared, that the kings and principal men of Ireland did, without compulsion, submit to Henry the Second

as their liege lord, who, at the desire of the Irish, ordained that the laws of England should be of force, and observed in this kingdom. That by this agreement Ireland obtained the benefit of English law, with many other privileges, particularly that of having a distinct parliament, in which weighty and important matters relating to this kingdom, were to be treated, discussed, and determined. That this concession and compact, ratified by succeeding kings, encouraged the English to come over and settle in Ireland, where they were to enjoy the same laws, the same liberties, and a constitution similar to that of England. That by this constitution and these privileges, his majesty's subjects had been enabled to discharge their duties faithfully to the crown; that therefore they insisted upon them, and hoped to have them preserved inviolable. That though the imperial crown of this realm was annexed to that of Great Britain, yet being a distinct dominion, and being no part of the kingdom of England, none could determine with the affairs of it, but such as were authorized by its known laws and customs, or the express consent of the King. That it was an invasion of his majesty's prerogative, and a grievance to his Irish subjects, for any court of judicature to take upon them to declare, that he could not by his authority in parliament, determine all controversies between his subjects of this kingdom, or that when they appeal to his majesty in parliament here, they did not bring their cause to a competent judicature. That in relation to the removal of causes by ap-

peal from this kingdom, the judges being sometimes ignorant of the common law of England, which was the rule of their decisions, did apply to his majesty for information, which he gave them by the advice, and with the assistance of the justices of the King's bench, who in ancient times constantly attended his person. That when the King's bench came to be fixed, appeals were made to it, though the king was not personally present. That from hence it could not be inferred upon any ground, that appeals from the parliament of Ireland, might be brought before the house of peers in England. They represent, that but two instances occurred, of appeals from the Irish court of chancery to the English peers, prior to the revolution, and two instances subsequent to it, until the year seventeen hundred and three, none of which ought to affect the jurisdiction of the Irish lords, as by the principles and the nature of their constitution, whatever judicial powers were lodged in the British parliament, with respect to that kingdom and its inferior courts. That therefore in the year seventeen hundred and three, upon a complaint of the Earl and Countess of Meath, that during the interval of parliament, an order of the English peers had dispossessed them of certain lands, which had been decreed them here, the Irish parliament restored them effectually, to the undisturbed possession of them. That there was just reason to conclude they would have acted the same part, respecting the appeal of the Bishop of Derry, had he not been removed, and a composition made by

his successor with the London society prevented it. They then state the appeal of Maurice Annesly from their judgment, with all the particulars of the interference of the English lords, in that cause, injurious to their privileges; and the pernicious consequences of this usurped jurisdiction of the British peers.

They observe to his majesty, that it is the right, and the happiness of his subjects in this kingdom, as well as of those in Britain, that by their respective constitutions, justice is administered to them without much trouble or expence, in the kingdom to which they belong; but if his majesty is deprived of the power of finally determining causes here, in his high court of parliament, those who were unable to follow them to Britain, must submit to whatever wrongs they might suffer, from the more rich and powerful. That if all judgments made in his majesty's highest court within this kingdom, were subject to be reversed by the lords in Great Britain, the liberty and property of all his subjects of Ireland, must thereby become finally dependent on the British peers, to the great diminution of that dependence, which by law they ought always to have on the English crown. That if the interference of the English lords, in receiving appeals from Ireland, be recognized and supported, it would take away the power from his majesty, of determining causes in his parliament of this country, and confine it entirely to the parliament of Britain. That the writs for summoning the lords and commons in both countries being the same,

they must in each kingdom be possessed of equal powers, or else the peerage of their nation be little more than an empty title, and the commons stand for ever deprived of the privilege of impeaching in parliament, which right could not possibly be maintained, if there were not within the realm a parliamentary judicature. That if the power of judicature may, by a vote of the British lords, be taken away from the parliament of Ireland, no reason could be given why the same lords might not, in the like manner, deprive the people of Ireland of the benefit of their whole constitution. That the lords of Great Britain have not in themselves any way, either by law or custom, of executing their decrees in Ireland. That this could only be accomplished by an extraordinary exertion of royal power, which would be highly prejudicial to the liberties of this nation.

They also inform his majesty, that to prevent the appellant from making farther application to the Irish parliament, his deputy receiver had paid her a sum exceeding eighteen hundred pounds, which, to the prejudice of his majesty's subjects, he expected would be refunded by government. That these proceedings of the English lords had greatly embarrassed his parliament of Ireland, disgusted the generality of his loyal subjects, and must of necessity expose all sheriffs and officers of justice to the greatest hardships, by this interference of different jurisdictions. They hoped, that all these things being duly considered, his majesty would justify the steps they had taken, for supporting his prerogative, and the just rights and

liberties of themselves and their fellow subjects.

But their hope was vain. Their representation and proceedings were laid before the British house of lords. Being read, they resolved, that the barons of the court of exchequer in Ireland, in their proceedings in the cause between Annesly and Sherlock, in obedience to their orders, had acted with courage according to law, in support of his majesty's prerogative, and with fidelity to the crown of Great Britain. That an humble address be presented to his majesty, to confer on them some mark of his royal favour, as a recompense for the injuries they had received, by being unjustly censured, and illegally imprisoned, for doing their duty. They then passed a law, which declared, that whereas attempts have been lately made, to shake off the subjection of Ireland unto, and dependence upon, the imperial crown of this realm, which will be of dangerous consequence to Great Britain and Ireland. And whereas the lords of Ireland in order thereto, have of late, against law, assumed to themselves a power and jurisdiction to examine, correct, and amend the judgments and decrees of the courts of justice in the kingdom of Ireland; therefore, for the better securing of the dependency of Ireland upon the crown of Great Britain, may it please your majesty, that it may be enacted, and it is hereby declared and enacted, by the king's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the said kingdom of

Ireland hath been, is, and of right ought to be, subordinate unto, and dependent upon the imperial crown of Great Britain, as being inseparably united and annexed thereunto; and that the king's majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled, had, hath, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes, of sufficient force and validity to bind the people and the kingdom of Ireland. And it further enacted and declared, that the house of lords of Ireland have not, nor of right ought to have, any jurisdiction to judge of, affirm or reverse any judgment, sentence, or decree, given or made in any court within the said kingdom; and that all proceedings before the said house of lords, upon any such judgment, sentence or decree, are, and are hereby declared to be, utterly null and void, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.

This thus degraded colonial assembly still gratified their elaborately inculcated prejudices, and their pitiful pride, in the exercise of a delegated, subordinate tyranny, by enforcing penal laws against their catholic countrymen; whilst England continued, with unabating asperity, to inflict political and commercial disabilities on both, the delegates of their tyranny, their negro drivers, as well as on the slaves of slaves.

In the year 1723, the commons unanimously resolved, that it was the indispensable duty of all magistrates to put the laws in immediate execution against popish priests; and that the ne-

glect of several magistrates, in executing the laws against papists, did greatly contribute to the growth of popery. The laws for this purpose, however, were not deemed sufficient. A bill was brought in, to explain and amend the acts to prevent the growth of popery. One of the most zealous promoters of it, in a long and laboured speech, took notice, that of all the countries wherein the reformed religion had prevailed, Sweden was freest from those secret, but irreconcilable, enemies of all protestant governments, popish ecclesiastics; which, he said, was visibly owing to the great wisdom of their laws, inflicting the penalty of castration on all such dangerous intruders into that kingdom. And concluded by moving, that this Gothic and inhuman penalty be added as a clause to the bill before them: to which the house, after a short debate, agreed; and ordered it to be laid before his grace the lord lieutenant, to be transmitted into England, with this remarkable request on their part, that he would recommend the same, in the most effectual manner, to his majesty. To which his grace was pleased to answer, that as he had so much at heart a matter, which he had recommended to the consideration of parliament at the beginning of the session, they might depend upon a due regard, on his part, to what was desired.

The bill was accordingly transmitted to England; but rejected there, by means of the humane and earnest interposition of cardinal Fleury with Mr. Walpole, whose great power and interest at

that juncture were then universally known. His grace the lord lieutenant, in his speech to that parliament, at the close of the session, in order to console them for the loss of their favourite bill, gave them to understand, that it miscarried merely by its not having been brought into the house, before the session was so far advanced. And after earnestly recommending to them, in their several stations, the care and preservation of the public peace, he added, that in his opinion that would be greatly promoted, by the vigorous execution of the laws against popish priests; and that he would contribute his part towards the prevention of that growing evil, by giving proper directions that such persons only should be put into the commission of the peace, as had distinguished themselves by their steady adherence to the protestant interest.*

The distinction between English by birth, and English by descent, was now systematically acted upon. Born in Ireland, was an incapacity to office, that the most decided enmity to the antient faith, and the remnant of the antient natives, could not remove.†

The united voice of the colony, guided by the patriotic Swift, had so little weight, that Wood's patent, to coin copper money, was yielded to it with great difficulty. So base was the metal, that a shilling of his halfpence was scarcely worth a penny. Parliament addressed, the privy council addressed, the corporations addressed his majesty,

* Currie. Hist. Rev. Civil Wars.

† Boulter's State Letters.

against Wood's halfpence; the grand jury of the county of Dublin presented all persons, who attempted to impose it upon the people of Ireland, enemies to government, and to the peace, safety and welfare of his majesty's government. The English by birth, at length deemed it necessary to revoke the patent; Boulter thought it expedient, and the patent was revoked.

Now and then a patriotic genius arose, like lightning illuminating the gloom of a clouded night, reminding the public of the many shackles, imposed on their commerce, their manufactures, the nuisance of absentees draining the country of money, and the intolerable grievance, to a people called free, to be governed by a foreign legislature, without for the present producing any other effect, than the diffusion of political knowledge. Of these the most distinguished was dean Swift, whose patriotic exertions are still gratefully acknowledged by his countrymen. The state to which Ireland was reduced, in those days when Irishmen dared not to complain, he feared not to publish. He commences his *State of Ireland* in the year 1727, enumerating, by rules generally known, and never contradicted, what are the true causes of any countries flourishing and growing rich; and then examines what effects arise from those causes in the kingdom of Ireland.

“ The first cause of a kingdom's thriving is, the fruitfulness of the soil, to produce the necessities and conveniencies of life; not only sufficient for the inhabitants, but for exportation into other countries.

The second is, the industry of the people, in working up all their native commodities, to the last degree of manufacture.

The third is, the conveniency of safe ports and havens to carry out their own goods, as much manufactured, and bring in those of others, as little manufactured, as the nature of mutual commerce will allow.

The fourth is, that the natives should, as much as possible, export and import their goods in vessels of their own timber, made in their own country.

The fifth is, the privilege of free trade in all foreign countries, which will permit them; except to those who are in war with their own prince or state.

The sixth is, by being governed only by laws made with their own consent; for otherwise they are not a free people. And therefore, all appeals for justice, or applications for favour or preferment, to another country, are so many grievous impoverishments.

The seventh is, by improvement of land, encouragement of agriculture, and thereby encreasing the number of their people; without which, any country, however blessed by nature, must continue poor.

The eighth is, the residence of the prince, or chief administrator of the civil power.

The ninth is, the concourse of foreigners for education, curiosity, or pleasure; or as to a general mart of trade.

The tenth is, by disposing all offices of honour,

profit, or trust, only to the natives, or at least with very few exceptions; where strangers have long inhabited the country, and are supposed to understand, and regard the interest of it as their own.

The eleventh is, when the rents of lands, and profits of employments, are spent in the country which produced them, and not in another; the former of which will certainly happen, where the love of our native country prevails.

The twelfth is, by the public revenues being all spent and employed at home, except on the occasions of a foreign war.

The thirteenth is, where the people are not obliged, unless they find it for their own interest or convenience, to receive any monies, except of their own coinage by a public mint, after the manner of all civilized nations.

The fourteenth is, a disposition of the people of a country to wear their own manufactures, and import as few incitements to luxury, either in cloaths, furniture, food or drink, as they possibly can live conveniently without.

There are many other causes of a nation's thriving, which I cannot at present recollect; but without advantage from at least some of these: after turning my thoughts a long time, I am not able to discover from whence our wealth proceeds, and therefore would gladly be better informed. In the mean time, I will here examine what share falls to Ireland of these causes, or of the effects and consequences.

It is not my intention to complain, but barely

to relate facts; and the matter is not of small importance. For it is allowed, that a man who lives in a solitary house, far from help, is not wise in endeavouring to acquire, in the neighbourhood, the reputation of being rich; because those who come for gold, will go off with pewter and brass, rather than return empty: and, in the common practice of the world, those who possess most wealth, make the least parade; which they leave to others, who have nothing else to bear them out, in shewing their faces on the Exchange.

As to the first cause of a nation's riches, being the fertility of the soil, as well as temperature of climate, we have no reason to complain; for, although the quantity of unprofitable land in this kingdom, reckoning bog, and rock, and barren mountain, be double in proportion to what it is in England; yet the native productions which both kingdoms deal in, are very near on equality in point of goodness; and might, with the same encouragement, be as well manufactured. I except mines and minerals; in some of which, however, we are only defective in point of skill and industry.

In the second, which is the industry of the people; our misfortune is not altogether owing to our own fault, but to a million of discouragements.

The conveniency of ports and havens, which nature hath bestowed so liberally on this kingdom, is of no more use to us, than a beautiful prospect to a man shut up in a dungeon.

As to shipping of its own, Ireland is so utterly

unprovided, that of all the excellent timber cut down within these fifty or sixty years; it can hardly be said, that the nation hath received the benefit of one valuable house to dwell in, or one ship to trade with.

Ireland is the only kingdom I ever heard or read of, either in antient or modern story, which was denied the liberty of exporting their native commodities and manufactures, wherever they pleased; except to countries at war with their own prince or state: yet this privilege, by the superiority of meer power, is refused us, in the most momentous parts of commerce; besides an act of navigation, to which we never consented, pinned down upon us, and rigorously executed; and a thousand other unexampled circumstances, as grievous, as they are invidious to mention. To go unto the rest.

It is too well known, that we are forced to obey some laws we never consented to; which is a condition I must not call by its true uncontroverted name, for fear of lord chief justice Whithed's ghost, with his *Libertas et natale solum*, written as a motto on his coach, as it stood at the door of the court, while he was perjuring himself to betray both. Thus, we are in the condition of patients, who have physick sent them by doctors at a distance, strangers to their constitution, and the nature of their disease: and thus, we are forced to pay five hundred per cent. to decide our properties; in all which, we have likewise the honour to be distinguished from the whole race of mankind.

As to improvement of land, those few who attempt that, or planting, through covetousness, or want of skill, generally leave things worse than they were; neither succeeding in trees nor hedges; and by running into the fancy of grazing, after the manner of the Scythians, are every day depopulating the country.

We are so far from having a king to reside among us, that even the viceroy is generally absent four fifths of his time in the government.

No strangers from other countries, make this a part of their travels; where they can expect to see nothing, but scenes of misery and desolation.

Those who have the misfortune to be born here, have the least title to any considerable employment; to which they are seldom preferred, but upon a political consideration.

One third part of the rents of Ireland is spent in England; which, with the profit of employments, pensions, appeals, journies of pleasure or health, education at the inns of court, and both universities, remittances at pleasure, the pay of all superior officers in the army; and other incidents, will amount to a full half of the income of the whole kingdom, all clear profit to England.

We are denied the liberty of coining gold, silver, or even copper. In the isle of Man, they coin their own silver; every petty prince, vassal to the emperor, can coin what money he pleaseth. And in this, as in most of the articles already mentioned, we are an exception to all other states or monarchies that were ever known in the world.

As to the last, or fourteenth article, we take

special care to act diametrically contrary to it in the whole course of our lives. Both sexes, especially the women, despise and abhor to wear any of their own manufactures, even those which are better made than in other countries; particularly a sort of silk plad, through which the workmen are forced to run a sort of gold thread that it may pass for Indian. Even ale and potatoes are imported from England as well as corn: and our foreign trade is little more than importation of French wine; for which I am told we pay ready money.

Now, if all this be true, upon which I could easily enlarge, I would be glad to know by what secret method it is, that we grow a rich and flourishing people, without liberty, trade, manufactures, inhabitants, money, or the privilege of coining; without industry, labour, or improvement of lands, and with more than half the rent and profits of the whole kingdom, annually exported; for which we receive not a single farthing: and to make up all this, nothing worth mentioning, except the linen of the north, a trade casual, corrupted, and at mercy; and some butter from Cork. If we do flourish, it must be against every law of nature and reason; like the thorn at Glastenbury, that blossoms in the midst of winter.

Let the worthy commissioners who come from England, ride round the kingdom, and observe the face of nature, or the faces of the natives; the improvement of the land; the thriving numerous plantations; the noble woods; the abundance

and vicinity of country seats; the commodious farmers' houses and barns: the towns and villages, where every body is busy, and thriving with all kind of manufactures; the shops full of goods, wrought to perfection, and filled with customers; the comfortable diet and dress, and dwellings of the people; the vast number of ships in our harbours and docks and ship-wrights in our sea-port towns; the roads crouded with carriers, laden with rich manufactures, the perpetual concourse to and fro of pompous equipages.

With what envy and admiration would those gentlemen return from so delightful a progress? What glorious reports would they make when they went back to England.

But my heart is too heavy to continue in this irony longer, for it is manifest, that whatever stranger took such a journey, would be apt to think himself travelling in Lapland or Ysland, rather than in a country so favoured by nature as ours, both in fruitfulness of soil, and temperature of climate. The miserable dress and diet, and dwelling of the people. The general desolation in most parts of the kingdom. The old seats of the nobility and gentry all in ruins, and no new ones in their stead. The families of farmers, who pay great rents, living in filth and nastiness upon butter-milk and potatoes, without a shoe or stocking to their feet; or a house so convenient as an English hog-sty, to receive them. These, indeed may be comfortable sights to an English spectator, who comes for a short time, only to learn the language, and returns back to his own

country, whither he finds all our wealth transmitted. *Nostra miseria magna es.*

There is not one argument used to prove the riches of Ireland, which is not a logical demonstration of its poverty. The rise of our rents, is squeezed out of the very blood, and vitals, and cloaths, and dwellings of the tenants; who live worse than English beggars. The lowness of interest, in all other countries, a sign of wealth, is in us a proof of misery; there being no trade to employ any borrower. Hence, alone, comes the dearness of land, since the savers have no other way to lay out their money. Hence the dearness of necessaries for life; because the tenants cannot afford to pay such extravagant rates for land, (which they must take, or go a begging) without raising the price of cattle, and of corn, although themselves should live upon chaff. Hence our increase of buildings in this city; because workmen have nothing to do, but employ one another, and one half of them are infallibly undone. Hence the daily encrease of bankers; who may be a necessary evil in a trading country, but so ruinous in ours, who, for their private advantage, have sent away all our silver, and one third of our gold; so that within three years past, the running cash of the nation, which was about five hundred thousand pounds, is now less than two; and must daily diminish, unless we have liberty to coin, as well as that important kingdom the isle of Man; and the meanest prince in the German empire, as I before observed.

I have sometimes thought, that this paradox

of the kingdom growing rich, is chiefly owing to those worthy gentlemen, the bankers; who, except some custom-house officers, birds of passage, oppressive thrifty 'squires, and a few others who shall be nameless, are the only thriving people among us: and I have often wished, that a law were enacted to hang up half a dozen bankers every year; and thereby interpose at least some short delay, to the further ruin of Ireland.

Ye are idle, ye are idle, answered Pharaoh to the Israelites, when they complained to his majesty, that they were forced to make bricks without straw.

England enjoys every one of those advantages for enriching a nation, which I have above enumerated; and into the bargain, a good million returned to them every year, without labour or hazard, or one farthing value received on our side. But how long we shall be able to continue the payment, I am not under the least concern. One thing I know, that when the hen is starved to death, there will be no more golden eggs.

I think it a little unhospitable, and others may call it a subtle piece of malice; that, because there may be a dozen families in this town, able to entertain their English friends in a generous manner at their tables; their guests, upon their return to England, shall report, that we wallow in riches and luxury.

Yet, I confess, I have known an hospital where all the household officers grew rich; while the poor, for whose sake it was built, were almost starving for want of food and raiment."

On the death of George I. June 11, 1727, his son, George II. succeeded, on the 15th of June. The accession of the house of Hanover made no material alteration in the state of Ireland, or condition of the catholics. The persecution of the latter can in no manner be imputed to a family, bred in the principles of toleration established in Germany. They were borne down by the general torrent of national hatred and religious intolerance, raging in England, and impelled by the authority of parliament and the clamours of the people, to enforce and even augment the penal laws. These victims of persecution having heard it reported, that their neglect in addressing queen Anne, on her accession, occasioned the enactment of the severest of the penalties, resolved to petition George I. The clamours and suspicions, raised against them at that period, debarred them of all access to the throne, directly or indirectly. On the accession of George II. they resumed the design of addressing; and hoped the more favourable reception therefrom, as their irreproachable behaviour, and steady loyalty, might have somewhat abated the rancour of their enemies. An humble address was accordingly drawn up, and presented to the lords justices, by lord Delvin and other leading catholics; but so little was they or their address noticed, at that time, that they were never informed whether it was transmitted or not.

To redeem the interest and principal of the national debt, a fund had been provided. An attempt to vest it in the crown for ever had failed.

Administration now endeavoured to have this fund granted to his majesty, for twenty-one years. The numbers for and against were equal. The votes were on the point of being taken, when colonel Tottenham, who had ridden post, entered the house of commons. His vote frustrated the views of government; and 'Tottenham in his boots' was long the theme of public applause.

The rigorous execution of the popery laws was again renewed in 1734. Application having been made to his majesty, to reverse some of the outlawries, the commons stated to his majesty, that nothing could enable them to defend his right and title to his crown so effectually, as the enjoyment of those estates, which have been the forfeitures of the rebellious Irish, and were then in the possession of his protestant subjects; and therefore, that they were fully assured, that he would discourage all applications or attempts that should be made in favour of such traitors or their descendants, so dangerous to the protestant interest of this kingdom. Notwithstanding his majesty's favourable answer, that 'he would for the future discourage all such applications and attempts,' to prevent the possibility of such claims being renewed, an act was passed, disqualifying catholics from practising as solicitors; the only branch of the law they were then permitted to practise. During its progress through parliament, a subscription was commenced, and money collected, to defray the expence necessarily attendant on legally opposing the passing of this bill. Some clergymen, in Munster, having been engaged in this

business, Hennessy, a parish priest, suspended by his superior for scandalous behaviour, to be revenged, gave information that the money was for the purpose of bringing in popery and the Pretender. After the strictest scrutiny, the sum collected was found not to exceed five pounds; yet the committee of the house of commons reported, that it appeared to them, that under colour of opposing heads of bills, great sums of money had been collected and raised, and a fund established by the popish inhabitants of the kingdom, through the influence of their clergy, highly detrimental to the protestant interest, and of imminent danger to the present happy establishment. The house resolved, that an humble address should be presented to the lord lieutenant, to issue his proclamation to all magistrates, to put the laws against popery in execution; and that it was the indispensable duty of all magistrates, and officers, to put the laws made to prevent the further growth of popery in Ireland, in due execution: and that the members of that house, in their respective counties and stations, would use their utmost endeavours to put the several laws against popery in due execution. The proclamation was issued, and the laws against popery were strictly executed by the magistrates in every part of the kingdom.

The frequent resolutions of the commons, aided by inflammatory anniversary sermons, and equally inflammatory pamphlets, occasionally preached and published, diffused such a spirit of rancour and animosity against catholics, among their protestant neighbours, as made the generality of them

believe, that the words popery, rebellion and massacre, really signified the same thing, and thereby excited such real terrors in these latter, as often brought the liberties, and sometimes the lives of the former, into imminent danger. The most shocking circumstances of the Irish insurrection in 1641, and of the English gun-powder treason in 1605, were studiously revived and aggravated in these sermons and pamphlets, with a degree of virulence and exaggeration, which, as it surpassed the most extravagant fictions of romance or poetry, so it possessed their uninformed, though often well-meaning hearers and readers, with lasting and general abhorrence of these people. The crimes, real or supposed, of catholics dead more than a century before, were imputed, intentionally, to all those who survived them, however innocent, of the same religious persuasion. By these means, an antient nobleman and privy-counsellor, of great power and influence, was so enthusiastically incensed against them, that, in the year 1743, on the threatened invasion of England by the French, under the command of mareschal Saxe, he openly declared in council, that as the papists had begun the massacre on them, about an hundred years before, so he thought it both reasonable and lawful, on their parts, to prevent them, at that dangerous juncture, by first falling upon them. And although the barbarity of that suggestion was quickly over-ruled in that honourable assembly; yet so entirely were some of the lower northern dissenters possessed and influenced, by this prevailing prepossession and rancour against catho-

lics, that in the same year, and for the same declared purpose of prevention, a conspiracy was actually formed by some of the inhabitants of Lurgan, to rise in the night-time, and destroy all their neighbours of that denomination in their beds. But this inhuman purpose was also frustrated, by an information of the honest protestant publican, in whose house the conspirators had met to settle the execution of their scheme, sworn before the Rev. Mr. Ford, a justice of the peace in that district, who with difficulty put a stop to the intended massacre.

On account of the Scottish rebellion in 1745, in favour of the pretender, in which it will presently appear, that not a single Irish catholic, lay or clerical, was any way engaged, the minds of the protestants all over the kingdom were so much irritated by the inflammatory means before-mentioned, together with the additional incentives of pastoral letters, of the like evil tendency, from all the bishops of the kingdom to their respective diocesans, that dreadful consequences, with regard to these inoffensive people, were justly apprehended; and probably would have ensued, had not the great wisdom and lenity of the then chief governor, the earl of Chesterfield, frequently and earnestly interposed. This nobleman, though pressed from all quarters by their powerful enemies, on a pretended knowledge of their disaffection, but really from the malignity of prejudice, to put the laws in force against them, always eluded their importunities, either by his own uncommon sagacity and resolution, or by some happy turn of

pleasantry, which never failed to expose the folly of their apprehensions; for he quickly discovered, that they had neither the power nor the inclination to give the government any disturbance. And he even assured both houses of parliament, “ that France, which alone encouraged and supported the rash adventurer, had made use of him only as the occasional tool of their politics, and not as the real object of their care. That although Great Britain had, in the course of this century, been often molested by insurrections at home and invasions from abroad, Ireland had happily and deservedly enjoyed uninterrupted tranquillity.” And in short, that this attempt to shake his majesty’s throne, would serve to establish it the more firmly, since all Europe must know the unanimous zeal and affection of his subjects, for the defence of his person and government.”

The great goodness and mercy of providence in sending such a governor among us, at that period of suspicion and danger, will be for ever most gratefully remembered by these people. Even their enemies in parliament, at the close of his administration, seem to have, in some measure, retracted their former councils of rigour and severity; for the commons in their address at the end of their session, after mentioning their late unquiet apprehensions, “ acknowledged, with cheerfulness and the utmost gratitude, that the profound tranquillity which, without any extraordinary increase of public expence, the nation, had hitherto enjoyed, was the result of his excellency’s wise and vigilant administration; formed

upon the principles, and carried on by the uniform exercise of lenity without remissness, and of firmness without severity.”

I promised to make it appear, that no Irish catholic, lay or clerical, was any way engaged in the Scottish rebellion of 1745. I shall now perform my promise. Lord Chief Justice Marlay’s charge to the grand juries of the city and county of Dublin, bears honorable testimony to their loyalty. “When posterity read,” says he, “that in this age a rebellion was carried on in Great Britain, without the least colour or pretence of oppression, nay, by many who had not even that false pretence of religion to palliate their treason against a prince, one of the best, the most merciful, just, and most generous of our royal line, who has given the fortunes of all criminals, whether forfeited for crimes against the state, or for other offences, to their children or relations (a grace never practised before); who has exposed his person at the head of his armies, in defence of the liberties of his kingdoms, and of Europe; and that Ireland, where much the greatest part of the inhabitants profess a religion, which sometimes has authorised, or at least justified rebellion, not only preserved peace at home, but contributed to restore it among his subjects of Great Britain; will they not believe that the people of Ireland were actuated by something more than their duty and allegiance? will they not be convinced, that they were animated by a generous sense of gratitude, and zeal for their great benefactor, and fully sensible of the happiness of being

blessed by living under the protection of a monarch, who, like the glorious king William, the Henries, and Edwards, his royal predecessors, has himself led his armies to victory, and despised danger in the cause of his people; and one from whom we not only expect, but are assured of, a race of princes, equally eminent for their generosity, prudence and courage.”

In the year 1762, upon a debate in the house of lords upon the expediency of raising five regiments of these catholics, for the service of the king of Portugal, Doctor Stone (then Primate), in answer to some common-place objections against the good faith and loyalty of these people, which were revived with virulence on that occasion, declared publicly in the house of lords, that “in the year 1747, after that rebellion was intirely suppressed, happening to be in England, he had an opportunity of perusing all the papers of the rebels, and their correspondents, which were seized in the custody of Murray, the pretender’s secretary; and that, after having spent much time and taken great pains in examining them (not without some share of the then common suspicion, that there might be some private understanding and intercourse between them and the Irish catholics), he could not discover the least trace, hint, or intimation of such intercourse or correspondence in them; or of any of the latter’s favouring, abetting, or having been so much as made acquainted with the designs or proceedings of these rebels. And what,” he said, “he wondered at most at all was, that in all his re-

searches, he had not met with any passage in any of these papers, from which he could infer, that either their Holy Father the Pope, or any of his cardinals, bishops, or other dignitaries of that church; or any of the Irish clergy, had either directly or indirectly, encouraged, aided or approved of, the commencing or carrying on of that rebellion."

'That no man should ever doubt of what complexion the spirit actuating the persecutors of the catholic faith, they invited and embraced with open arms, the enemies of Christ and of his church; professing equal contempt for the cross. It was natural enough for the enemies of the faith to associate. Thus the infidel rulers of the French republic, while they laboured with might and main to undermine and abolish the christian faith, naturalized the Jews. Vain was their endeavour. To a land, ruled by wolves and tygers, impoverished even to beggary, by restrictions on industry, exorbitant taxation, and immense tributes to England, the Jews would not come. The circumcized race will never consider any country their home, but that promised them by their prophets. Therefore they are not addicted to the cultivation or purchase of land, subsisting by traffic, and such other means as will always leave them ready to obey the long expected signal of departure for the holy land. They did say, that, among a people purposely impoverished, there was no chance of living; as a beggared population must, by dire necessity, be driven to their wits end, to such shifts as to out-jew the

very Jews. It was the observation of a Jewish rabbi, in Saxony, who entertained me very kindly. On asking him, why there were no synagogues in Ireland? he replied, smiling, be so good as to tell me why, in so fertile a land, and so happily situated for commerce, your people are such poor rogues, that you are greater Jews than ourselves, whence our people could not live among you. But to return to the Irish persecutors, fraternizing with the enemies of Christ. The Irish commons, in the session of 1747, brought heads of a bill into their house, for naturalizing persons professing the Jewish religion; which were committed, agreed to by the house without any amendment, and presented to his grace the lord lieutenant, to be by him transmitted into England. In the session immediately preceding, the same bill was brought into the commons, and carried through without any debate; but it then miscarried either here or in England; as it also did this second time.*

After the departure of the earl of Chesterfield, in the spring of 1746, the kingdom was governed by lords justices till September, when the earl of Harrington arrived. The death of Sir James Sommerville the following year, and of alderman Pearson, representatives for the city, gave occasion to a remarkable contest for members to succeed them, and called forth to public view a character conspicuously distinguished. Strong natural powers, especially when excited to action by public spirit, have rendered men eminent, though

* Currie. Hist. Rev. Civil Wars.

unaccompanied by the advantages of a liberal education, by riches, station, and the influence of powerful connexions. Of this Charles Lucas exhibited a striking example. Some years before, this extraordinary man, having attracted the notice of his fellow citizens, was admitted to the common council. Here he resolved to exert himself in behalf of their privileges. The new rules, framed in the reign of Charles II., by authority derived from a clause in the act of explanation, had, as in other corporate towns, changed the powers of the city corporation. To increase the influence of the crown, among other innovations, they deprived the commons of the power of choosing the city magistrates, and placed it in the board of aldermen, subject in its exercise on each election to the approbation of the chief governor and privy council. Of this injury Lucas loudly complained. But the law being absolute, could not be controuled. Suspecting however, that in other respects encroachments had been made on the rights of the citizens, not justified by law, he examined the city charters, and searched diligently into ancient records, by which he was convinced that his apprehensions were well founded. He published his discoveries, explained the evidence resulting from them, and encouraged the people to take the proper steps for obtaining redress. In consequence, a warm contest commenced betwixt the commons and aldermen in seventeen hundred and forty-one, which continued the two succeeding years.

Though the former struggled in vain to reco-

ver their lost privileges, the exertions of Lucas in every stage of the dispute, were strenuous and persevering. These services rendered him so respectable, and raised him so high in the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens, that on the death of Sir James Sommerville, they encouraged him to declare himself a candidate to represent them in parliament. Ambitious of an office so flattering, which would give him an opportunity of exerting his abilities to the greatest advantage in the service, not only of the city of Dublin, but of his country, he complied with their desire. His speeches to the several corporations on this occasion, which were bold, nervous and animated, in favour of liberty, encreased their attachment to him. But a number of addresses to his fellow citizens, which he wrote and published, still in a higher degree, encreased his popularity. In these, among other subjects, he considered distinctly the several branches of the constitution, pointed out to the electors of Dublin, and to the nation, the privileges of Irishmen, and the various injuries they had sustained by the usurped interference of the British legislature. The bold truths which he unfolded, and the unreserved severity of his strictures, alarmed government. They determined to crush him by the hand of power, unable to withstand his spirited efforts in behalf of his country by reason and argument. For this purpose, certain passages, the most expressive of our grievances, and, for that reason, most obnoxious to the state, were collected from his publications, and made the foundation of a charge

which was brought against him before parliament. The rights of the commons, which with particular attention he laboured to vindicate and ascertain, had been one of the subjects of his free discussion. Instead of protecting him, in reward of this service and of his exertions in behalf of the liberties of Ireland, the commons, obedient to an authority hostile to their dignity and to the interest of their constituents, listened to the charge, voted him an enemy to his country, and addressed the lord lieutenant to order him to be prosecuted by his majesty's attorney-general. As the cause of Lucas was that of liberty and the constitution, every freeman in the kingdom was interested in his safety. But the favour of the public was not sufficient to defend him from the danger by which he was threatened. To avoid the impending storm, he fled from Ireland. Fortune, which now deserted this oppressed patriot, after he had spent some time in banishment, placed him in a most honorable point of view. The exertions of his friends rose superior to the influence by which he was persecuted. Upon a new vacancy, he returned to Dublin, and was elected one of the representatives for the city. The same virtuous principles, and the same exertions in behalf of our constitutional rights, for which he had been hitherto remarkable, invariably distinguished his opposition in parliament. Proof against the alluring seducements of venality, he preserved his integrity unsullied, and as he had lived, died with the character of the incorruptible Lucas.

It is not unworthy of remark, that the protestant ascendancy, established by English policy in Ireland as the surest lever for moving her at pleasure, began, early after the revolution, to shew symptoms of Irish patriotism, and oppose what they considered the unnatural sacrifice of Irish interest and prosperity, to any foreign interest, under whatever name or pretext. During a period of near fourscore years, the catholics being excluded from the pale of the constitution, the task naturally devolved on Irish protestants, sharing somewhat of power with their English masters. Some writers and speakers of ability, managed the cause of the people, both in and out of parliament, supported by the whole body of the presbyterians, by principle and practice attached to constitutional freedom. From Lucas's memorial, and that presented to his majesty, king George II. by the earl of Kildare, the political creed, professed by the patriots of that day, is plain enough.

To his excellency William earl of Harrington, lord lieutenant general and general governor of Ireland, may it please your excellency, the love and duty I owe my sovereign, and the regard I bear his governments and dominions, in general, those of this my native country, in particular, which are most intimately and inseparably connected and linked together, in one common bond of affection, interest and allegiance, prompt me to use all just and lawful means to obtain an effectual redress of the capital grievances of this kingdom and city, which no good subject, or

good governor, can overlook or slight, consistent with the principles of his moral, religious and political obligations to our system of civil society.

These motives, which your excellency must be too wise and just to condemn, or discourage, first induced me to contend with my fraternity, for a reformation of my profession in the years 1735, and 1741, and since, with my superiors, for the restoration of the rights and liberties of the commons and citizens of this broken and reduced metropolis.

If your excellency will take the trouble of perusing this and the following address to the lords justices, with the dedication to the king, I flatter myself, you will see such causes assigned for the courses, I have taken, to obtain some redress of the heavy grievances of which I complain, that, I hope, you will not only pardon the presumption of once more addressing, or attempting to address your excellency in this manner, but allow there is some degree of merit in struggling through the many dangers and difficulties that have been opposed to me, for the bringing or endeavouring to bring such important truths to the royal ear, as, if regarded, must tend to the unspeakable honor and advantage of the king and people of these realms, in the security and welfare of each of which, I look upon myself to be equally interested and concerned.

However, my lord, as the same necessity which first urged me to lay our complaints before you, still strongly subsists, I should be wanting in the duty of a citizen, and a subject, and fall short

of the character I have endeavoured to establish in life, if I should slacken in my just application to obtain a restoration of our rights and liberties; and therefore, regardless of the manifold disadvantages of station, birth and education, under which I labour, and of the numberless misrepresentations made of me, by designing men, I presume to make one effort more to bring the complaints of Dublin before my royal sovereign; of the greatness and integrity of whose soul I am so fully convinced, that I am firmly persuaded he wants but due information to redress the grievances of his subjects.

I am well aware, my lord, that some of these great men, who have thought fit to represent me to your excellency, heretofore, as a madman, will now set me forth in more hateful colours. It is become much the fashion, of late, to vilify me, to represent me as a riotous, tumultuous incendiary, a disaffected person, a condemner of government, of magistracy, even of majesty.

To acquit myself of these foul imputations, I must beg your excellency will permit me lay before you a short review of the course I have taken to obtain justice and law, the common benefits of the constitution of this my country.

When I first discovered the invasions made on the rights and privileges of the commons and citizens of this city, I tried all just and moderate means to set things to right within the city; and though the invaders gave me all manner of unjust, forcible, and cruel opposition, and have now scarce left so much of the traces of our constitu-

tion as might demonstrate we had any, I still preserve the respect due to the magistracy of the city, though I can look upon it only as *de facto*, not *de jure*.

Failing of redress within the city courts, I had recourse, with my fellows, to the courts of law, and though we were attended with no better success there, I can defy mine enemies to shew the instance in which I failed to pay due respect to the judges of our courts.

I have, it is true, my lord, taken the benefits our constitution admits, of appealing against, or complaining of the proceedings of some of these judges, to an higher power, to your excellency, as the representative of his majesty; whether or no the terms in which I did so were wrong or injurious, I humbly submit to your excellency's recollection.

One of the most sensible happinesses of our system of government is, that every person, who does but think himself aggrieved by any branch of the subordinate administration, has the privilege of appealing or complaining to a superior, in a regular gradation from one to another, even to the supreme magistrate. This is a privilege too sacred for any loyal subject to give up, for any good governor to suppress.

When I first claimed the benefits of this privilege, and layed before your excellency the complaints of Dublin, it must be confessed, you heard me with patience, with humanity, with a tender feeling of the sufferings of the king's subjects, and some pain for the shocks given our consti-

tution. What unhappy misrepresentations of facts, or person, or what unauthorised arrogance or insolence of servants, prevented your excellency's taking the steps in this affair, that your wisdom and justice promised, or afterwards excluded me the access to your excellency's presence, I cannot take upon me to point out; but, as the same principles of justice and law bind alike the small and the great; when I judged it expedient, and my bounden duty, to appeal to our sovereign, I thought it necessary to let him see, that I had recourse to the highest power here, before I presumed to trouble his majesty, which then, not before, gave me the subject's right to apply for relief to the throne.

I addressed the lords justices of this kingdom, in your excellency's absence. I presented them with the charter and dedication, which I now lay before your excellency, and prayed to have it transmitted to his majesty; but their excellencies thought fit to decline granting my petition.

Thus your excellency may see, the same necessity still subsists, the same principles prompt, and the same motives that before prevailed, still strongly induce me, with all respect and humility, to address your excellency, and to supplicate you on behalf of myself, and the rest of my suffering fellow-subjects and citizens, to forward the summary state of our case in the following charter and dedication, to the royal presence.

There is another reason, to me, no less cogent, for begging this favour with greater earnestness of your excellency; my reputation is dearer to

me than life; that is rigorously, severely struck at: the most violent, the most lawless, the most inhuman threats are daily uttered against me; for none other crime, that I know of, than that of complaining of public injuries, dangerous and destructive to the king and to his people. I have appealed to Cæsar. Shall Cæsar's servants obstruct the laying my complaints before the throne? and even punish me for complaining? Shall this be done under the administration of a Stanhope? God forbid!

My lord, to sum up all my desires and intentions in a few words; I only wish to discharge the end of my creation, in fulfilling the duty of a subject, in every station, to which it shall please all-wise, all ruling Providence to call me, with due submission and subjection to every loyal and good governor and subordinate magistrate, and an equal right to oppose, by law, and to complain of the misconduct of all those, who endanger our constitution by endangering the right of the subject, or neglecting to discharge the duties of their stations.

If in all that I have hitherto attempted, with this intent, I have done wrong to any man, I am open to conviction, and ready to make the fullest atonement. Therefore, if I have advanced any thing repugnant to the principles of our government, or inconsistent with the rights and privileges of the subject, I humbly conceive my intentions ought to be considered, and I should be properly examined, before the threatened weight and fury of power be let loose upon me. It is

not to be deemed beneath the dignity of good governors to inform active and well-meaning subjects of errors in their conduct; if such can be made to appear in my transactions, I shall from the same principle, that I mean to advance truths, in my judgment conducive to the happiness of this city, and these kingdoms, as readily, as publicly, retract errors, or mistakes.

My lord, I must beg your excellency's indulgence to make one declaration more. At a time, when ministerial influence of court dependence is rather sought than avoided, by men of independent fortunes, it may be suspected, that one of my low sphere may have some private or selfish views in thus attending upon your excellency. To obviate such an imputation, I thus solemnly declare, that though I wish to be always well understood, and, upon occasion, well heard, by the government; yet, even that, is only for the public good; because, that for myself, I have nothing to ask, nor any thing to fear from the highest powers; my sole ambition is to discharge the duties of my station. And, in so doing, I shall ever take care to approve myself, his majesty's most unfeigned loving and loyal subject, as well as, may it please your excellency, your excellency's most dutiful and most faithful humble servant, C. Lucas. October, 1749.

To his most serene and august majesty king George II. The humble memorial of J. Fitzgerald, earl of Kildare, &c. most humbly sheweth, that your memorialist is the eldest peer of the realm, by descent, as lineally sprung from the

ancient and august blood of the noble earl of Kildare, who came over under the invincible banner of your august predecessor Henry the second, when his arms conquered the kingdom of Ireland.

That your memorialist, on this foundation, has the greater presumption to address your august majesty, as his ancestors have ever proved themselves steady adherents to the conquest of that kingdom, and were greatly instrumental in the reduction thereof, by their money, interest and forces.

That though they were first sent over with letters patent, under Henry the second's banner, to conquer that kingdom, yet by the inheritance of lands, by intermarriages with princesses of the kingdom, they became powerful, and might have conquered for themselves, notwithstanding which, their allegiance was such, as that, on that sovereign's mandate to stop the progress of war, we obeyed, and relinquished our title of conquest, laid down our arms, and received that monarch with due homage and allegiance, resigning our conquests as became subjects, and also prevailed with the sovereign princes, bishops, nobles, clergy and gentry, to acknowledge him right and lawful sovereign of Ireland, and of the seas, sea-ports, and other demesnes of the kingdom.

That on this presumption, your memorialist has, in the most humble manner, at the request of the natives of Ireland, your majesty's true liege subjects, not only the aborigines thereof, but the English colonies, sent over by Henry the second, Richard the second, Elizabeth, Charles, Crom-

well the usurper, William the third of glorious memory, and other kings, your majesty's predecessors, and the conquerors of Ireland, made bold to lay before your majesty the true state of their several and respective grievances, a burden now become almost too heavy to bear.

And your memorialist was rather induced to lay this memorial at your august majesty's feet, as it was on good presumption surmised, that all access to your royal ear was shut up, and your liege subjects debarred the liberty of complaining, a right ever allowed to your majesty's liege subjects of what degree or condition soever.

That no notice being taken of several remonstrances heretofore made by your majesty's liege subjects, it was humbly presumed, that such remonstrances had been stopped, and debarred in their progress to your royal ear.

That your memorialist, at the request of several thousands of your liege subjects, as well the nobles as the clergy, the gentry, and commonalty of the kingdom, has ventured on this bold step, for which he humbly craves your majesty's pardon, as nothing but the distress of his countrymen, your most loyal subjects, could have drawn him to this presumption.

That in general the face of your royal kingdom of Ireland wears discontent, a discontent not coloured from caprice or faction, but purely founded on ministerial misapplication.

That though several persons, particularly N. G. was called to account for the public money, which he had drawn out of the treasury, and deposited

in the banks, yet this inquisition came to nothing by the mediation of party, and the interposition of power.

That the duke of Dorset's son lord George, though in high and lucrative employments already, not satisfied therewith, has restlessly grasped at power, insatiable in his acquisitions.

That the primate, who is now on the pinnacle of honour, connected with the said noble lord, has made use of influence to invest himself of temporal power, and like a greedy churchman, affects to be a second Wolsey in the senate.

That influences being so predominant, corruption so formidable, and elections so controlled by the mighty power of those two statesmen, your loyal kingdom of Ireland feels the sad effects of it, and dreads this duumvirate as much as England did that of the Earl of Stafford and Archbishop Laud.

That your other ministers, officers, subjects, and servants, being cut out of dignity and power by this formidable monopoly, can scarce perform the proper functions of their ministry, as all measures are determined by fatal and influenced majorities in the houses.

That the citizens of Dublin have for a long time laboured under an unprecedented slavery in subjection to the bankers of administration, who act in a despotic manner, raising and disposing the public revenues of the city, just as to them seems fitting.

That your majesty's interest in the hearts of your loyal subjects is likely to be affected by

those arbitrary measures, as the landed interest is very much injured thereby, and as few care to represent their country in parliament, where a junto of two or three men disconcert every measure taken for the good of the subject, or the cause of common liberty.

That your memorialist has nothing to ask of your majesty, neither place, civil or military, neither employment or preferment for himself or friends, and that nothing but his duty to your majesty, and natural hatred to such detestable monopoly, could have induced your memorialist to this presumption, who is, in all respects, your most loyal and dutiful subject, J. Fitzgerald.

While the Roman catholic body, languishing under pains and disqualifications, left the political interests of the country to the discussion and management of their protestant countrymen, they received from the duke of Bedford, appointed lord lieutenant the 25th of September, 1757, a kind intimation of an intention to alleviate some of their sufferings; which, from whatever motive, whether to disgust and divide the protestant patriots, as yet generally unripe for toleration, or to baffle the French threats of invasion, was speedily circulated; and produced a grateful acknowledgment from the catholic clergy, in the following exhortation to their flocks.

It is now time, christians, that you return your most grateful thanks to the Almighty God, who, after visiting you with a scarcity, which approached near unto a famine, has been graciously pleased, like a merciful father, to hear your pray-

ers, and feed you with a plentiful harvest; nor ought you to forget those kind benefactors, who, in the severest times, mindful only of the public good, generously bestowed, without any distinction of persons, those large charities by which thousands were preserved, who otherwise must have miserably perished the victims of hunger and poverty. We ought especially to be most earnest in our thanks to the chief governors and magistrates of the kingdom, and of this city in particular, who, on this occasion, proved the fathers and saviours of the nation.

But as we have not a more effectual method of shewing our acknowledgments to our temporal governors, than by an humble, peaceful, and obedient behaviour; as hitherto, we earnestly exhort you to continue in the same happy and christian dispositions; and thus, by degrees, you will entirely efface in their minds those evil impressions, which have been conceived so much to our prejudice, and industriously propagated by our enemies. A series of more than sixty years, spent, with a pious resignation, under the hardships of very severe penal laws, and with the greatest thankfulness for the lenity and moderation with which they were executed, ever since the accession of the present royal family, is certainly a fact which must outweigh, in the minds of all unbiassed persons, any misconceived opinions of the doctrine and tenets of our holy church.

You know that it has always been our constant practice, as ministers of Jesus Christ, to inspire you with the greatest horror for thefts, frauds,

murders, and the like abominable crimes; as being contrary to the laws of God and nature, destructive of civil society, condemned by our most holy church; which, so far from justifying them on the score of religion, or any other pretext whatsoever, delivers the unrepenting authors of such criminal practices over to Satan.

We are no less zealous than ever in exhorting you to abstain from cursing, swearing, and blaspheming; detestable vices, to which the poorer sort of our people are most unhappily addicted, and which must at one time or other bring down the vengeance of heaven upon you in some visible punishment, unless you absolutely refrain from them. It is probable that, from hence, some people have taken occasion to brand us with this infamous calumny, that we need not fear to take false oaths, and, consequently, to perjure ourselves; as if we believed that any power upon earth could authorise such damnable practices, or grant dispensations for this purpose. How unjust and cruel this charge is, you know by our instructions to you, both in public and private, in which we have ever condemned such doctrines, as false and impious. Others, likewise, may easily know it from the constant behaviour of numbers of Roman catholics, who have given the strongest proofs of their abhorrence to those tenets, by refusing to take oaths, which, however conducive to their temporal interest, appeared to them utterly repugnant to the principles of their religion.

We must now entreat you, dear christians, to offer up your most fervent prayers to the Almighty

God, who holds in his hands the hearts of kings and princes; beseech him to direct the counsels of our rulers, to inspire them with sentiments of moderation and compassion towards us. We ought to be more earnest, at this juncture, in our supplications to heaven; as some very honorable personages have encouraged us to hope for a mitigation of the penal laws. Pray, then, the Almighty to give blessing to these their generous designs, and to aid their counsels, in such a manner, that, whilst they intend to assist us, like kind benefactors, they may not, contrary to their intentions, by mistaking the means, most irretrievably destroy us.

To conclude; be just in your dealings, sober in your conduct, religious in your practice; avoid riots, quarrels and tumults; and thus you will approve yourselves good citizens, peaceable subjects, and pious christians.*

Some of the most leading catholics in spirit and ability, of whom the most prominent were Charles O'Connor, of Balinagar, and Dr. Curry, met, consulted, and laid the plan of a catholic committee, for managing the catholic interest; and of literary publications, for wiping off the foul aspersions thrown on their body by malevolence and prejudice. Their first meeting, at the Globe tavern, Essex-street, Dublin, consisted only of seven. At the recommendation of Dr. Curry and Mr. O'Connor, it resolved to employ eminent literary men, in support of catholic claims.

* From the Dublin Journal, October 4, 1757.

In October, 1759, the duke of Bedford sent a message to the house of commons, acquainting them with certain intelligence, sent him by Mr. Pitt, of a design on the part of the French to invade Ireland. The bad success of their arms, in every quarter of the world, prompted them to this desperate attempt; to which they were encouraged by hopes, held out by Irish exiles, of their being joined, in case of invasion, by the majority of the population. The parliament, of course, answered the message with an address of loyalty, and the usual proffer of support; but the alarm caused such a run on the banks, that public credit was endangered, had not the landed and mercantile interests associated for its support.

The catholics neglected not to testify their allegiance, and offer their hearty support, at this critical period of alarm, by the following address to the lord lieutenant, signed by three hundred merchants and citizens.

May it please your grace, we, his majesty's dutiful and faithful subjects, the Roman Catholic gentlemen, merchants, and citizens of the city of Dublin, do, with the greatest respect, approach your grace, the illustrious representative of the best of kings, with our hearty congratulations on those glorious successes, by sea and land, which have attended his majesty's arms, in the prosecution of this just and necessary war.

We gratefully acknowledge the lenity extended to us by his most sacred majesty, and by his royal father, of happy memory. Our allegiance, may it please your grace, is confirmed by affection and

gratitude; our religion commands it; and it shall be our invariable rule firmly and inviolably to adhere to it.

We are called to this duty, at the present time in particular, when a foreign enemy is meditating desperate attempts to interrupt the happiness and disturb the repose, which these kingdoms have so long enjoyed, under a monarch who places his chief glory in approving himself the common father of his people: and we sincerely assure your grace, that we are ready and willing, to the utmost of our abilities, to assist in supporting his majesty's government against all hostile attempts whatsoever.

Whenever, my lord, it shall please the Almighty, that the legislative power of this realm shall deem the peaceable conduct of his majesty's Roman catholic subjects of Ireland, for many years past, an object worthy of its favourable attention, we humbly hope means may then be devised, to render so numerous a body more useful members to the community, and more strengthening friends to the state, than they could possibly have hitherto been, under the restraint of the many penal laws against them.

We most humbly beseech your grace to represent to his majesty these sentiments and resolutions of his majesty's faithful subjects, the Roman catholics of this metropolis; who sincerely wish, that a peace, honourable to his majesty, and advantageous to his kingdoms, may be the issue of the present war; and that the people of Ireland, may be long governed by your grace, a

viceroi, in whom wisdom, moderation, and justice are so eminently conspicuous. Dec. 1, 1759.

The answer of his excellency was sent to the Rt. Hon. John Ponsonby, speaker of the house of commons.

Sir, I beg the favour of you, to return my most sincere thanks to the gentlemen, the Roman catholics of Dublin, for the address which you brought me from them this morning, and for the good opinion which they have therein expressed of me.

The zeal and attachment, which they profess for his majesty's person and government, can never be more seasonably manifested, than in the present conjuncture.

It gives me the greatest pleasure to find that they are so fully sensible of the lenity, which hath been extended to them, during the whole course of his majesty's reign; and they may be assured, that, so long as they conduct themselves with duty and affection to the king, they will not fail to receive his majesty's protection. I am, with great truth and regard, sir, your most obedient humble servant, Bedford.

This first manifestation of a lenient disposition towards Irish catholics, was grounded on the most obvious policy. The fate of Conflans's expedition was as yet undetermined. It was wise to publish, that he could hope for no co-operation in Ireland; nor could any thing more effectually deter a disaffected party from joining the invader, than the unanimous declaration of loyalty, addressed to government from all parts of the king-

dom. Very happily, however, both for protestants and catholics, they merited, on that occasion, the thanks of their rulers, without exposing their courage or loyalty to any trial. Conflans was defeated, by admiral Hawke, near Belleisle; and Thurot's squadron, after various adventures, was first dispersed and damaged in storms, and the remnant, after the adventure of Carrickfergus, captured.

The lenity experienced by Irish catholics during the reign of George the 2d, is erroneously attributed to the interference of the French minister. It has been already observed, that a much more powerful advocate, Lewis the 14th, could obtain nothing in their favour from the ungrateful Charles. It was owing to a more powerful cause, the warm affection and friendship, subsisting between the king and the Austrian ambassador, one of the Irish exiles, Nicholas, lord viscount Taffe. Educated in the same school, in Germany, they contracted an early friendship, of the most lasting kind. This partiality of the English monarch was one motive, if not the principal, for his being employed as ambassador from the court of Vienna. George, being desirous of his company, and the court of Vienna interested that their ambassador should be his favourite. In their conversation and correspondence, the stile was simply, dear George and dear Nicholas, as when school fellows; and when the wrath of the king was raised against his ministers, sometimes to such a degree as to kick the prime minister out of his presence, the surest resource

was, to send for Nicholas, whose presence and conversation operated like a charm, in calming the royal mind. An instance of their strict amity is not quite forgotten in Dublin. One Sunday, as lord Taaffe went to Stephen-street chapel, to his devotion, he found it shut, and was informed that all the chapels in Dublin were in like manner closed. Nicholas forthwith wrote a note to his royal friend, after the following laconic manner. Dear George, it is a hard case, that in your kingdom of Ireland, my own native country, I am not allowed to hear prayers, but the chapel gates are nailed up, which harsh treatment has been extended to all the chapels in Dublin. Yours, Nicholas Taaffe. His majesty was enraged at this insult offered to his friend, and ordered the minister to send peremptory orders to the lord lieutenant to open the chapels, and make an apology to Nicholas.

The reign of George II. was glorious for England; Ireland shared the toils of war by sea and land, but neither the laurels nor the prize of victory. Divided into two hostile parties, the persecuted and the persecutors; while the protestant pale enforced the laws to prevent the further growth of popery, they were obliged to submit to laws, enacted by their masters in England, to prevent the further growth of Ireland's prosperity; laws, interdicting commercial intercourse, trade and manufactures; laws which, to use the language of Pitt and Hawkesbury, deprived Ireland of the bounty of heaven, and the industry of man. Neither the distress of Ireland, nor the suf-

ferings of the catholics, are imputable to George the Second. He partook none of the national hatred, or monopolizing spirit, of his subjects. Passionate and blunt, but honest and honorable, he was, like the rest of his family, inclined to principles of impartial justice and toleration.

An. 1760, George III. ascended the throne, with the most auspicious circumstances. England may be said to have reached, at this period, the pinnacle of human greatness. Her commerce and manufactures covered all the seas; there was no end to her riches; her debt was trifling; her taxes moderate; and the nation enjoyed, since the revolution, uncontested rights and privileges, unknown to the rest of Europe, under a political constitution, with all its defects, confessedly the best known; and which, with such amendments as time makes necessary in all human institutions, would combine a corresponding practice with the most beautiful theory in the world. Her power became paramount in the empire of Indostan; and the American colonies were a giant in the cradle. The northern nations supplied naval stores, and other raw materials; the Dutch were her retail merchants; the lords of Potosi supplied the precious metals; and her old rival, France, was her most profitable customer. The war with the house of Bourbon was uncommonly successful, under the able administration of Pitt, senior; and continued so, until it terminated in a treaty of peace, very humiliating to France and Spain. Her unbounded commerce, and extensive fisheries, were protected by fleets, that gave law

to the ocean; and to whose supercilious pride every flag must strike obeysance!

The peace, that terminated this prosperous war, humbled France and Spain, and enlarged the British dominion in Hindoostan, led to serious consequences. Since the revolution, the ruling powers adhered to its principles; not alone for consistency, but because the expelled family still subsisted, with claims and partizans not well opposed but on revolutionary grounds. Now this check was removed. The pretensions became antiquated; the family was nearly extinct; the partizans were few and contemptible; and the only powers, from whom any considerable aid could be expected, in support of a desperate cause, were dictated to.

In this spring-tide of power and glory, the administration thought it expedient to tax the American colonies; in order to defray, in part, the expences of a war, alleged to be undertaken in their defence. These zealous adherents to constitutional freedom, pleaded the injustice of being taxed by a legislature in which they were not represented; while they offered to contribute, for the benefit of the parent country, in their colonial assemblies, more than the sum proposed to be levied on them in England. They further argued, that the war was waged rather for the aggrandizement of England, and the depression of its European rivals, than for the advantage of the colonies; and that they had already contributed largely, in men, money and provisions. The plea was plausible, and maintained by a strong,

enlightened and active party in the British dominions, the dissenters and whigs, in and out of parliament. It was argued, with some appearance of truth, that legislating for an unrepresented people was deviating from the principles of freedom, sapping the foundation of the British constitution; and that separating legislation from representation was introducing arbitrary power, whether attempted by one, one hundred, or ten hundred. Another method of taxing the colonies was resorted to, namely, by taxing the commodities exclusively purchased from the mother country; for instance, tea.

The second scheme fired the Americans, considering it an insidious and insulting experiment, adding insult to oppression; whereupon the bold Bostonians boarded the English ships in their harbour, and flung their tea into the sea. Both parties continuing obstinate, a war ensued, which converted the colonies into the independent states, rapidly rising to power and opulence.

Until this memorable epoch, a dark cloud, of unequalled calamity, hung over the sacred soil of Innisfail. Swarms of adventurers succeeded each other, thirsting for each other's destruction, as well as for that of the antient proprietors, whose anarchy and feuds made their natural superiority of no avail. The catholic pale was acrimonious and treacherous towards the catholic Milesians, whom they stiled the Irish enemy. They vainly flattered themselves that would always be supported and honoured, as the English garrison, the true guardians of the English inte-

rest until the Irish enemy was completely subdued. Experience taught them, through a long series of sufferings, the fallacy of their confidence. Elizabethians, Cromwellians, Williamites, treated them, in their turn, as its enemies. A protestant pale was established on the ruins of the English catholic pale, which persecuted catholics of both races without distinction.

The parliament of the protestant pale, Irish it was not, had been so moulded, that no effort within it, without a powerful external impulse, could be effectual. Deputed, as the members were, from James Stuart's forty rotten boroughs, and venal factious electors scarcely less rotten, and few in number, as the great majority of the nation was excluded from elections, the majority was, by its very formation, at the disposal of the highest bidder. Hence every effort for the relief of Ireland proved abortive.

A careful review of those melancholy times will convince an impartial enquirer, that all the debates and publications of that day, in which the English faction alone was concerned, have ceased to be interesting to the generality of Irishmen, except as far as the merit of argument, wit and composition, may entitle them to notice. Persecution for conscience sake, privation of civil rights, oppressive exclusion from the means and fruits of industry, overwhelming tributes in diverse shapes, rents and pensions to absentees, sinecure salaries, interest to creditors, were not the only evils afflicting this unfortunate people; an epidemic disease among the horned cattle,

and some failures of the harvest, occasioned great scarcity, and taxes were imposed more than the people could afford to pay. “ The revenue, for the reasons already given, decreased in 1755, fell lower in 1756, and still lower in 1757. In the last year, the vaunted prosperity of Ireland was changed into misery and distress; the lower classes of our people wanted food, the money arising from the extravagance of the rich was freely applied to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. One of the first steps of the late duke of Bedford’s administration, and which reflects honor on his memory, was obtaining a king’s letter, dated 31st of March, 1757, for £20,000 to be laid out as his grace should think the most likely to afford the most speedy and effectual relief to his majesty’s poor subjects of this kingdom. His grace, in his speech from the throne, humanely expresses his wish, that some method might be found out to prevent the calamities, that are the consequences of a want of corn, which had been in part felt the last year, and to which this country had been too often exposed. The commons acknowledge, that those calamities had been frequently and were too sensibly and fatally experienced in the course of the last year; thank his grace for his early and charitable attention to the necessities of the poor of this country in their late distresses, and make use of those remarkable expressions, ‘ that they will most chearfully embrace every practicable method to promote tillage.’ They knew that the encouragement of manufactures were the effectual means, and that these means were not in

their power. The ability of the nation was estimated by the money in the treasury, and the pensions on the civil establishment, exclusive of French, which at Lady-day 1755, were 38,003l. 15s. 0d. amounted at Lady-day 1757, to 49,293l. 15s. 0d.

The same ideas were entertained of the resources of this country in the session of 1759. Great Britain had made extraordinary efforts, and engaged in enormous expences for the protection of the whole empire. This country was in immediate danger of an invasion. Every Irishman was agreed, that she should assist Great Britain to the utmost of her ability, but this ability was too highly estimated. The nation abounded rather in loyalty than in wealth. Our brethren in Great Britain had however formed a different opinion, and surveying their own strength, were incomplete judges of our weakness. A lord lieutenant of too much virtue and magnanimity to speak what he did not think, takes notice from the throne, of the prosperous state of this country, improving daily in its manufactures and commerce. His grace had done much to bring it to that state, by obtaining for us some of the best laws in our books of statutes. But this part of the speech was not taken notice of, either in the address to his majesty, or to his grace, from a house of commons well disposed to give every mark of duty and respect, and to pay every compliment consistent with truth. The event proved the wisdom of their reserve. The public expences were greatly increased, the pen-

sions on the civil establishments, exclusive of French, at Lady-day 1759, amounted to 55,497l. 5s. Od.: there was at the same time a great augmentation of military expence. Six new regiments and a troop were raised in a very short space of time. An unanimous and unlimited address of confidence to his grace, a specifick vote of credit for £150,000, which was afterwards provided for in the loan bill of that session, a second vote of credit in the same session for £300,000, the raising the rate of interest paid by government one per cent. and the payment out of the treasury in little more than one year, of 703,957l. 3s. 1½d. were the consequences of these increased expences. The effects of these exertions were immediately and severely felt by the kingdom. These loans could not be supplied by a poor country, without draining the bankers of their cash; three of the principal houses (Clement's, Dawson's, and Mitchell's) among them stopped payment, the three remaining banks in Dublin discounted no paper, and in fact did no business. Public and private credit, that had been drooping since the year 1754, had now fallen prostrate. At a general meeting of the merchants of Dublin, in April 1760, with several members of the house of commons, the inability of the former to carry on business was universally acknowledged, not from the want of capital, but from the stoppage of all paper circulation, and the refusal of the remaining bankers to discount the bills even of the first houses."*

* Hutchinson on the Commercial Restraints of Ireland.

Among the numerous addresses to his majesty king George III. on his accession, was the following, from the Irish Roman Catholics.

Most gracious Sovereign, we your majesty's dutiful and faithful subjects, the Roman catholics of the kingdom of Ireland, beg leave to approach your majesty with this humble tender of our unfeigned loyalty, on your majesty's happy accession to the throne of your ancestors.

While your majesty's subjects, of all denominations, are now endeavouring to be foremost in the exertion of every duty towards your majesty's person and government; and while all circumstances of affairs, at home and abroad, unite for the present happiness and future glory of your reign; permit us to condole with your majesty, and to pour out our sincere sorrow for the loss we have sustained by the death of a monarch, who had always approved himself the common father of all his people; a loss, the more sensible on our part, as the repose we have so long enjoyed entirely proceeded from his royal clemency, and the mild administration of his government in this kingdom.

Ever since the accession of your majesty's royal house to the throne of these realms, we have, in a particular manner, experienced the paternal interposition of your illustrious predecessors. We, most gracious sovereign, who are so unfortunately distinguished from the rest of our fellow-subjects, cannot subsist without a continuance of the royal favour and protection.

Sensible of the same hereditary compassion in

your majesty's breast, we most humbly hope for that share in the happiness of your reign, which our peculiar circumstances can admit: and we beg leave to assure your majesty of our grateful and constant return of affection and loyalty; a loyalty, which our conduct has proved, and our religion enforces: happy! might it entitle us to express a wish, that, of all your majesty's dutiful subjects of this kingdom, we alone may not be left incapable of promoting the general welfare and prosperity of it.

May the Almighty so influence and direct your counsels, through the whole course of your reign, that they may be ever productive of real happiness to all your people; and may that reign be as memorable, for its duration and felicity, as for the greatness and variety of those blessings, which we have already so much reason to expect from it!

This humble testimony of gratitude and loyalty, the zealous exhortations of the catholic clergy to their flocks, the beneficent disposition of the sovereign, could not screen the catholics from violent oppression; for which the lawless proceedings of the White Boys furnished the pretext.

In the beginning of 1762, the peasantry, in the south of Ireland, driven by oppression to despair, assembled in parties, at night, covered with white shirts, and dug up the ground not laid down for tillage; bullocks, for whom the inhabitants were dispossessed, were particular objects of their resentment; the enclosures of the commons they

levelled ; and endeavoured to prevent tythes being collected, by threatening and torturing the tythe-proctors.

The Irish catholics easily foresaw, that the disorders of the Munster levellers would affect them ; and on the first rising of that mob, addressed the earl of Halifax, then in the government, with the strongest assurances of their allegiance to his majesty. The superiors of the catholic clergy, in that province, were at the same time edifyingly active in pressing the duty of obedience and loyalty on their people. This is well known. He of Waterford exerted himself, by giving the government the best and earliest intelligence he could, of the intentions and motions of those miscreants ;—he of Ossory distinguished himself also, by excellent instructions (published in the public papers) for the civil conduct of the people under his care. They issued excommunications, and denounced, in vain, the most tremendous censures of the church against the incorrigible and obstinate.* As their distress continued, the White Boys persevered in their tumultuous proceedings. The severity of the rack-rent, and the exactions of tythe-proctors, drove these half-naked slaves to despair. It may be said, the Connaught peasantry were also oppressed, without disturbing the peace. Allowing that they were, yet the tithe did not press so heavily upon them as in Munster ; because it did not, as there, attack the poor man's potatoe-garden ; besides, there is a greater number of small

* Taafe's Observations on the Affairs of Ireland.

estates in Connaught, whose owners reside, and circulate much of their income, in one shape or another, among the people. Munster was far worse situated than the other two provinces. Ulster carried on the staple manufacture of the kingdom. Leinster exercised an extensive, improving agriculture. In the south, destitute of both, man was depreciated below his natural value. The hire of his labour bore no proportion to the price of the soil, or of its produce. That country, stocked with cattle, for the use of the most wealthy, commercial and manufacturing people in the world, disposed of them nearly as high as they would sell for in England; and raised rents in a similar ratio. The cottier's plot thus coming very dear, and the wages of his labour, as having no bidders either in the pursuits of agriculture or manufactures so very low, not increased since the days of Elizabeth, and adjusted by a combination of employers. When to this deplorable distress is added, the tyrannical levy of the tenth sack of potatoes on the poor man's potatoe garden, little wonder, that people, thus oppressed, who could expect no protection from magistrates or law, should have recourse to nocturnal violence, to alleviate their sufferings, or at least procure some respite, by the terror they endeavoured to inspire.

Numbers of the rioters were apprehended in the counties of Limerick, Cork, Tipperary. Judge Aston was sent to try them on a special commission, but not for high treason as several of the bills were intended. A few guilty of felony were con-

demned and executed. These wretched men, instead of being treated as objects of compassion, whom extreme misery had forced into this unwarrantable opposition to law, were prosecuted in some places with great severity. Aston did his duty, but in the discharge of it, would not violate the dictates of humanity. On his return to Dublin, he was witness to a sight most affecting, and which he must have beheld with the highest satisfaction. For above ten miles from Clonmel, both sides of the road were lined with men, women and children, who, as he passed along, kneeled down and supplicated heaven to bless him as their protector and guardian angel.

The riots of these forlorn men, were soon construed into a general popish conspiracy against the government; because, indeed, the greatest part of them were papists, at least in name; although it was well known, that several protestant gentlemen, and magistrates of considerable influence in that province, did all along, for their own private ends, connive at, if not foment these tumults; and although we were assured by authority, “that the authors of these riots consisted indiscriminately of persons of different persuasions, and that no marks of disaffection to his majesty’s person or government appeared in any of these people.”*

This authentic declaration was grounded on the report which had been made to government, by persons of distinguished loyalty and eminence in the law, sent down and commissioned some time

* Dublin Gazette.

before to inquire upon the spot into the real causes and circumstances of these riots; which report was afterwards confirmed by the going judges of assize, and by the dying protestations of the first five of these unhappy men, who were executed in 1762 at Waterford, for having been present at the burning down of a cabin, upon the information of one of their associates, who was the very person that with his own hand set fire to it. These men, immediately before their execution, publicly declared, and took God to witness, “that in all these tumults it never did enter into their thoughts to do any thing against the king or government.

The oppressors of the unfortunate Irish peasantry, wishing to interpret the effects of misery and despair into a war of religion, selected N. Sheehy, parish priest of Clogheen, the victim with whose blood they designed to seal their foul calumny. This man was giddy and officious, but not ill-meaning, with somewhat of a Quixotish cast of mind towards relieving all those within his district, whom he fancied to be injured or oppressed; and, setting aside his unavoidable connection with those rioters, several hundred of whom were his parishioners, he was a clergyman of an unimpeached character in all other respects. In the course of these disturbances, he had been indicted, and tried as a popish priest, but no sufficient evidence having appeared against him on that charge, he was always acquitted, to his own great misfortune; for, had he been convicted, his punishment, which would be only transpor-

tation, might have prevented his ignominious death, which soon after followed.

In the year 1764, the government was prevailed upon by his powerful enemies, to issue a proclamation against him, as a person guilty of high treason, offering a reward of three hundred pounds for taking him, which Sheehy in his retreat happening to hear of, immediately wrote up to Secretary Waite, “ that as he was not conscious of any such crime, as he was charged with in the proclamation, he was ready to save to the government the money offered for taking him, by surrendering himself out of hand, to be tried for that or any other crime he might be accused of; not at Clonmel, where he feared that the power and malice of his enemies were too prevalent for justice (as they soon after indeed proved to be), but at the court of King’s bench, Dublin. His proposal having been accepted, he was accordingly brought up to Dublin, and tried there for rebellion, of which, however, after a severe scrutiny of fourteen years, he was honourably acquitted; no evidence having appeared against him but a blackguard boy, a common prostitute, and an impeached thief, all brought out of Clonmel jail, and bribed for the purpose of witnessing against him.

But his inveterate enemies, who like so many blood-hounds had pursued him to Dublin, finding themselves disappointed there, resolved upon his destruction at all events. One Bridge, an infamous informer against some of those who had been executed for these riots, was said to have

been murdered by their associates in revenge, (although his body could never be found*), and a considerable reward was offered for discovering and convicting the murderer. Sheehy, immediately after his acquittal in Dublin for rebellion, was indicted by his pursuers for this murder, and notwithstanding the promise given him by those in office on surrendering himself, he was transmitted to Clonmell, to be tried there for this new crime, and, upon the sole evidence of the same infamous witnesses, whose testimony had been so justly reprobated in Dublin, was there condemned to be hanged and quartered for that murder.

What barefaced injustice and inhumanity were shewn to this unfortunate man on that occasion,† is known and testified by many thousands of creditable persons, who were present and eye-witnesses on the day of his trial. A party of horse surrounded the court, admitting and excluding

* It was positively sworn, by two unexceptionable witnesses, that he privately left the kingdom some short time before he was said to have been murdered.

† I shall mention only one instance out of many. During his trial, Mr. Keating, a person of known property and credit in that country, having given the clearest and fullest evidence, that, during the whole night of the supposed murder of Bridge, the prisoner, Nicholas Sheehy, had lain in his house, that he could not have left it in the night time without his knowledge, and consequently that he could not have been even present at the murder; the Rev. Mr. H., an active manager in these trials, stood up, and after looking on a paper that he held in his hand, informed the court, that he had Mr. Keating's name on his list, as one of those that were concerned in the killing of a corporal and sergeant, in a former rescue of some of these levellers. Upon which he was

whomsoever they thought proper ; while others of them, with a certain knight at their head, scampered the streets in a formidable manner, forcing into inns and private lodgings in the town, challenging and questioning all new comers, menacing his friends, and encouraging his enemies : even after sentence of death was pronounced against him (which one would think might have satisfied the malice of his enemies), his attorney found it necessary for his safety, to steal out of the town by night, and with all possible speed make his escape to Dublin.

The night before his execution, which was but the second after his sentence, he wrote a letter to major Sirr, wherein he declared his innocence of the crime for which he was next day to suffer death ; and on the morning of that day, just before he was brought forth to execution, he, in the presence of the sub-sheriff and a clergyman who attended him, again declared his innocence

immediately hurried away to Kilkenny jail, where he lay for some time, loaded with irons, in a dark and loathsome dungeon : by this proceeding, not only his evidence was rendered useless to Sheehy, but also that of many others was prevented, who came on purpose to testify the same thing, but instantly withdrew themselves, for fear of meeting with the same treatment. Mr. Keating was afterwards tried for this pretended murder at the assizes of Kilkenny, but was honourably acquitted ; too late, however, to be of any service to poor Sheehy, who was hanged and quartered some time before Mr. Keating's acquittal. The very same evidence, which was looked upon at Clonmell as good and sufficient to condemn Mr. Sheehy, having been afterwards rejected at Kilkenny, as prevaricating and contradictory with respect to Mr. Keating.

of the murder; solemnly protesting at the same time, as he was a dying man, just going to appear before the most awful of tribunals, that he never had engaged any of the rioters in the service of the French king, by tendering them oaths, or otherwise; that he never had distributed money among them on that account, nor had ever received money from France, or any other foreign court, either directly or indirectly, for any such purpose; that he never knew of any French or other foreign officers being among these rioters; or of any Roman catholics of property or note, being concerned with them. At the place of execution he solemnly averred the same things, adding, “that he never heard an oath of allegiance to any foreign prince proposed or administered in his life-time; nor ever knew any thing of the murder of Bridge, until he heard it publicly talked of; nor did he know that there ever was any such design on foot.”

Every body knew, that this clergyman might, if he pleased, have easily made his escape to France, when he first heard of the proclamation for apprehending him: and he was all along accused of having been agent for the French king, in raising and fomenting these tumults, he could not doubt of finding a safe retreat, and suitable recompence for such services, in any part of his dominions. It seems, therefore, absurd in the highest degree, to imagine that he, or any man, being at the same time conscious of the complicated guilt of rebellion and murder, would have wilfully neglected the double opportunity of

escaping the punishment due to such crimes, and of living at his ease and safety in another kingdom; or that any person, so criminally circumstanced as he was thought to be, would have at all surrendered himself to a public trial, without friends, money, or family connections; and, above all, without that consciousness of his innocence, on which, and the protection of the Almighty, he might possibly have relied for his deliverance.

Emboldened by this success, the knight before-mentioned published an advertisement, somewhat in the nature of a manifesto, wherein, after having presumed to censure administration for not punishing, with greater and unjustifiable severity, these wretched rioters; he named a certain day, on which the following persons of credit and substance in that country, viz. Edmund Sheehy, James Buxton, James Farrel, and others, were to be tried by commission at Clonmell, as principals or accomplices in the aforesaid murder of Bridge. And, as if he meant by dint of numbers, to intimidate even the judges into lawless rigour and severity, he sent forth a sort of authoritative summons “to every gentleman in the county to attend that commission.” His summons was punctually obeyed by his numerous and powerful adherents; and these innocent (as will appear hereafter) men were sentenced to be hanged and quartered by that commission.

It will naturally be asked, upon what new evidence this sentence was passed; as it may well be supposed, that no use was made of the former reprobated witnesses on this occasion. But truth

obliges me to answer, with reluctance and shame, that use was made of them, and a principal use too, in the trial and conviction of these devoted men. The managers, however, for the crown, as they impudently called themselves, being afraid, or ashamed, to trust the success of their sanguinary purposes to the now enfeebled, because generally exploded, testimony of these miscreants, looked out for certain props, under the name of approvers, to strengthen and support their tottering evidence. These they soon found in the persons of Herbert and Bier, two prisoners, accused like the rest of the murder of Bridge; and who, though absolutely strangers to it (as they themselves had often sworn in the jail), were nevertheless in equal danger of being hanged for it, if they did not purchase their pardon by becoming approvers of the former false witnesses. Herbert was so conscious of his innocence in respect to Bridge's murder, that he had come to Clonmel, in order to give evidence in favour of the priest Sheehy; but his arrival and business being soon made known, effectual measures were taken to prevent his giving such evidence. Accordingly bills of high treason were found against him, upon the information of one of these reprobate witnesses, and a party of light horse sent to take him prisoner. Bier, upon his removal afterwards to Newgate in Dublin, declared, in a dangerous fit of sickness, to the ordinary of that prison, with evident marks of sincere repentance, "that for any thing he knew to the contrary, the before mentioned Edmund Sheehy, James Buxton, and

James Farrell, were entirely innocent of the fact for which they had suffered death; and that nothing in this world, but the preservation of his own life, which he saw was in the most imminent danger, should have tempted him to be guilty of the complicated crimes of perjury and murder, as he then confessed he was, when he swore away the lives of those innocent men."

On Saturday morning, May 3d, 1766, the convicts were hanged and quartered at Clogheen. Their behaviour at the place of execution was chearful, but devout; and modest, though resolute. It was impossible for any one in their circumstances, to counterfeit that resignation, serenity, and pleasing hope, which appeared strikingly in all their countenances and gestures. Conscious of their innocence, they seemed to hasten to receive the reward prepared in the next life, for those who suffer patiently in this. For, not content to forgive, they prayed for and blessed their prosecutors, judges, and juries, as likewise all those who were otherwise instrumental in procuring their deaths. After they were tied up, and just before they were turned off, each of them, in his turn, read a paper aloud, without tremour, hesitation, or other visible emotion, wherein they solemnly protested, as dying christians, who were quickly to appear before the judgment-seat of God, "that they had no share either by act, counsel or knowledge in the murder of Bridge; that they never heard an oath of allegiance to any foreign prince proposed or administered amongst them; that they never heard,

that any scheme of rebellion, high treason, or a massacre, was intended, offered, or even thought of, by any of them; that they never knew of any commissions, or French or Spanish officers being sent, or of any money being paid to these rioters. After this, they severally declared, in the same solemn manner, that certain gentlemen, whose names they then mentioned, had tampered with them at different times, pressing them to make, what they called useful discoveries, by giving in examinations against numbers of Roman catholics of fortune in that province (some of whom they particularly named) as actually concerned in a conspiracy and intended massacre, which were never once thought of. But above all, that they urged them to swear, that the priest, Nicholas Sheehy, died with a lye in his mouth; without doing which, they said, no other discovery would avail them. Upon these conditions, they promised and undertook to procure their pardons, acquainting them at the same time, that they should certainly be hanged, if they did not comply with them." Thus did those virtuous men, prefer even death to a life of guilt, remorse, and shame, the just punishment in this world of their tempters, as well as the wretches seduced by them.

Such, during the space of three or four years, was the fearful and pitiable state of the Roman catholics of Munster, and so general did the panic at length become, so many of the lower sort were already hanged, in jail, or on the informers lists, that the greatest part of the rest fled through fear; so that the land lay untilled,

for want of hands to cultivate it, and a famine was with reason apprehended. As for the better sort, who had something to lose (and who, for that reason, were the persons chiefly aimed at by the managers of the prosecution), they were at the utmost loss how to dispose of themselves. If they left the country, their absence was construed into a proof of their guilt: if they remained in it, they were in imminent danger of having their lives sworn away by informers and approvers; for the suborning and corrupting of witnesses on that occasion, was frequent and barefaced, to a degree almost beyond belief. The very stews were raked, and the jails rummaged in search of evidence; and the most notoriously profligate in both were selected and tampered with, to give informations of the private transactions and designs of reputable men, with whom they never had any dealing, intercourse or acquaintance; nay, to whose very persons they were often found to be strangers, when confronted at their trial.

In short, so exactly did these prosecutions in Ireland resemble, in every particular, those which were formerly set on foot in England, for that villainous fiction of Oates's plot, that the former seems to have been planned and carried on entirely on the model of the latter; and the same just observation that hath been made on the English sanguinary proceedings, is perfectly applicable to those which I have now, in part, related, viz. "that for the credit of the nation, it were indeed better to bury them in eternal oblivion, but that it is necessary to perpetuate the remembrance of

them, as well to maintain the truth of history, as to warn, if possible, our posterity and all mankind, never again to fall into so shameful and so barbarous a delusion.”*

The celebrated Arthur Young, in his tour through Munster, honestly declares, that there he saw the ne plus ultra of human misery. “The landlord of an Irish estate, inhabited by Roman catholics, is a sort of despot, who yields obedience in what concerns the poor to no law but that of his will. To discover what the liberty of a people is, we must live among them, and not look for it in the statutes of the realm: the language of written law may be that of liberty, but the situation of the poor may speak no language but that of slavery: there is too much of this contradiction in Ireland. A long series of oppressions, aided by many very ill-judged laws, have brought landlords into a habit of exerting a very lofty superiority, and their vassals into that of an honest, unlimited submission: speaking a language that is despised, professing a religion that is abhorred, and being disarmed, the poor find themselves in many cases slaves even in the bosom of written liberty. Landlords, that have resided much abroad, are usually humane in their ideas, but the habit of tyranny naturally contracts the mind, so that even in this polished age, there are instances of a severe carriage towards the poor, which is quite unknown in England.

Nay, I have heard anecdotes of the lives of the people being made free with, without any appre-

* Hist. Rev. Civil Wars of Ireland.

hension of the justice of a jury. But let it not be imagined that is common; formerly it happened every day, but law gains ground——The execution of the law lies very much in the hands of justices of the peace, many of whom are drawn from the most illiberal class in the kingdom. If a poor man lodges a complaint against a gentleman, or any animal that chuses to call itself a gentleman, and the justice issues out a summons for his appearance, it is a fixed affront, and he will infallibly be called out. Where manners are in conspiracy against law, to whom are the oppressed people to have resource?—They know their situation too well to think of it; they can have no defence but by means of protection from one gentleman against another, who probably protects his vassal as he would the sheep he intends to eat.

The colours of this picture are not charged. To assert that all these cases are common, would be an exaggeration; but to say that an unfeeling landlord will do all this with impunity, is to keep strictly to truth: and what is liberty but a farce and a jest, if its blessings are received as the favour of kindness and humanity, instead of being the inheritance of right?

Consequences have flowed from these oppressions which ought long ago to have put a stop to them. In England we have heard much of White-boys, Steel-boys, Oak-boys, Peep-of-day-boys, &c. But these various insurgents are not to be confounded, for they are very different. The proper distinction in the discontents of the

people is into protestant and catholic. All but the White-boys are among the manufacturing protestants in the north: the White-boys, catholic labourers in the south. From the best intelligence I could gain, the riots of the manufacturers had no other foundation, but such variations in the manufacture as all fabrics experience, and which they had themselves known and submitted to before. The case, however, was different with the White-boys; who, being labouring catholics, met with all those oppressions I have described, and would probably have continued in full submission, had not very severe treatment in respect of tithes, united with a great speculative rise of rents about the same time, blown up the flame of resistance: the atrocious acts they were guilty of made them the object of general indignation: acts were passed for their punishment, which seemed calculated for the meridian of Barbary; this arose to such a height, that by one they were to be hanged under circumstances without the common formalities of a trial, which though repealed by the following sessions marks the spirit of punishment; while others remain yet the law of the land, that would, if executed, tend more to raise than quell an insurrection. From all which it is manifest, that the gentlemen of Ireland never thought of a radical cure, from overlooking the real cause of disease, which in fact lay in themselves, and not in the wretches they doomed to the gallows. Let them change their own conduct entirely, and the poor will not long riot. Treat them like men who ought to be as free as

yourselves: put an end to that system of religious persecution, which for seventy years has divided the kingdom against itself; in these two circumstances lies the cure of insurrection, perform them completely, and you will have an affectionate poor, instead of oppressed and discontented vassals.”*

The disturbances, raised by the northern weavers, under the denominations of Hearts-of-oak, and Hearts-of-steel, were soon suppressed. They were not provoked by persecution, penalties, or discouragement of the linen manufacture; but by some internal regulations. The making and repairing highways was a heavy burden on those of the lower stations. The poor complained, that they were frequently compelled to work at roads made for the convenience of individuals, which were of no manner of advantage either to themselves or to the public. The inhabitants of a parish in Armagh declared they would make no more highways of the kind. As a mark of distinction, they put oaken branches in their hats, from which they called themselves Oak Boys. Those particularly concerned in superintending new roads and in repairing the old, were the first objects of their resentment; but very soon they turned their attention to other matters of complaint. The clergy, they alleged, exacted from them unreasonable tythes, the rent of their lands was more than they could bear. As new grievances opened to view, which they resolved to redress, the number of their partizans increased. The infection was communicated from parish to

* Young's Tour,

parish, until it spread to the counties of Armagh, Tyrone, Derry and Fermanagh, an. 1763. In their progress they exacted illegal oaths, and committed other excesses. The military were collected from the other provinces, who in a few weeks dispersed the insurgents. Next session of parliament the road act, that had been so justly complained of, was repealed, and another enacted, that roads should be made and repaired by a tax equally assessed upon the lands of both poor and rich.

The rising of the Steel-boys, in 1771, had its origin from the dispossessing the tenants on an estate. The leases on the estate of an absentee nobleman, in the county of Antrim, were expired. Instead of an additional rent, he proposed to take fines from his tenants, of an adequate value. Many could not comply with these terms: the fines were paid by others, who insisted upon a rent from the immediate tenants, greater than they were able to pay. In consequence, a number of them were dispossessed. Being thus deprived of their habitations, and of the means of subsistence, they became desperate, maimed the cattle and expressed the strongest resentment against those who were instrumental in reducing them to the state of distress in which they were involved.

One of the insurgents, charged with felony, was apprehended and carried to Belfast. The Steel-boys determined to save him, by force, from punishment. Several thousands assembled armed, and marched to Belfast, to rescue their associate. The prisoner was removed to the barrack, to

which the Steel-boys advanced. After a few shots were exchanged, it was deemed prudent to liberate the prisoner, who was carried off in triumph. Though many who were engaged in this enterprize returned home, and had afterwards no immediate connexion with the rioters, they still consisted of a considerable number, which daily increased, until the same spirit extended to the neighbouring counties. Grievances, nearly similar to those which had inflamed the Oak-boys to insurrection, were now the subjects of their complaint, and the objects of their pretended redress. Their excesses were likewise in some measure the same, but much more violent. Besides the oaths which they exacted, and other lesser injuries sustained by individuals, they destroyed houses, and, in some instances, were guilty of flagrant acts of inhumanity. Some were taken, and tried at Carrickfergus; but, whether from want of evidence, from fear of incurring the resentment of the populace, or from partiality in the witnesses and the jury, they were acquitted. On this the legislature interfered, and passed an act, by which all persons, indicted of such offences, were ordered to be tried in counties different from those in which the excesses were committed. Several were brought to trial at Dublin; but so strong was the prejudice against this breach of a fundamental law of the constitution, that no jury there would find them guilty. Soon after the obnoxious act was repealed. Reflexion now took place, and the pernicious consequence of the principles and the conduct of the insurgents began to be viewed

in a just light. Some of them were tried, condemned and executed. This, and the exertions of the military, extinguished the commotion. But the cause from whence it arose, and the fear of punishment, operating strongly on the minds of many of the insurgents, and the influence of their example extending to their relations, produced effects, that were permanent, and highly prejudicial; many thousands emigrated to America.

The general distress of Ireland at this juncture, an. 1773, emanating from popery laws, commercial restrictions, a long embargo on the provision trade of the south, with Spain, Portugal, and Holland, the insurrection of the Steel-boys, &c. having produced its necessary consequence, a failure in the revenue, a financial expedient was resorted to by lord Harcourt, though not supported by government interest, highly beneficial to Ireland, and a present resource to the distressed financier, an absentee tax. This equitable and beneficial measure was opposed and rejected, by the powerful interest of the great land owners on both sides of the water; yet not without a strong contest, as they mustered only twenty majority, having 122 votes against 102. An opposition, flowing from ambition, vanity, love of courtly pomp and luxury, was accounted for from more plausible pretences, by those to be affected by the tax, in the following letter to lord North, signed by the peers Devonshire, Besborough, Rockingham, Milton, Upper Ossory.

My lord, it is publicly reported, that a project has been communicated to the king's minist-

ters, for proposing in the parliament of Ireland a tax of regulation, which is particularly and exclusively to affect the property of those of his majesty's subjects, who possess lands in that kingdom, but whose ordinary residence is in this. It is in the same manner publicly understood, that this extraordinary design has been encouraged by an assurance from administration, that if the heads of a bill proposing such a tax, should be transmitted from Ireland, they would be returned with the sanction of his majesty's privy council here, under the great seal of England. My lord, we find ourselves under the description of those, who are to be the object of this unprecedented imposition. We possess considerable landed property in both kingdoms; our ordinary residence is in England. We have not hitherto considered such residence as an act of delinquency to be punished; or, as a political evil, to be corrected by the penal operation of a partial tax. We have had, many of us, our birth, and our earliest habits, in this kingdom; some of us have an indispensable public duty, and all of us (where such duty does not require such restriction) have the right of free subjects, of choosing our habitation in whatever part of his majesty's dominions we shall esteem most convenient. We cannot hear, without astonishment, of a scheme, by which we are to be stigmatized, by what is, in effect, a fine for our abode in this country, the principal member of the British empire, and the residence of our common sovereign. We have ever shewn the utmost readiness in contributing with the rest of

our fellow-subjects, in any legal and equal method, to the exigencies of the public service, and to the support of his majesty's government. We have ever borne a cordial, though not an exclusive regard, to the true interest of Ireland, and to all its rights and liberties: to none of which we think our residence in Great Britain to be in the least prejudicial, but rather the means, in very many cases, of affording them a timely and effectual support. We cannot avoid considering this scheme as in the highest degree injurious to the welfare of that kingdom as well as of this; its manifest tendency is to lessen the value of all landed property there, to put restrictions upon it unknown in any part of the British dominions; and as far as we can find, without parallel in any civilized country. It leads directly to a separation of these kingdoms in interest and affection, contrary to the standing policy of our ancestors, which has been, at every period, particularly at the glorious revolution, inseparably to connect them by every tie both of affection and interest. We apply to your lordship in particular. This is intended as a mode of public supply; and as we conceive the treasury of Ireland, as well as that of England, is in a great measure within your lordship's department, we flatter ourselves we shall not be refused authentic information concerning a matter in which we are so nearly concerned; that if the scheme, which we state to your lordship doth exist, we may be enabled to pursue every legal method of opposition to a project in every light unjust and impolitic.

The first essay towards relieving catholics from the severities of the penal statutes, was made in 1773. Two bills for this purpose, were brought in by three of the government party, Monk Mason, Sir Lucius O'Brien, and Hercules Langrishe; the one to enable them to receive land security for money lent; the other, qualifying them to take leases for lives. Both were lost; probably not from religious bigotry, a malady to which few statesmen are subject, but from the motives thus pointed out by Edmund Burke: "From what I have observed, it is pride, arrogance, a spirit of domination, and not a bigotted spirit of religion, that has caused and kept up those oppressive statutes. I am sure I have known those, who have oppressed papists in their civil rights, exceedingly indulgent to them in their religious ceremonies; and who wished them to continue in order to furnish pretences for oppression; and who never saw a man by conforming escape out of their power, but with grudging and regret. I have known men, to whom I am not uncharitable in saying, though they are dead, that they would become papists, in order to oppress protestants; if being protestants it was not in their power to oppress papists. It is injustice, and not a mistaken conscience, that has been the principle of persecution, at least as far as it has fallen under my observation."

Though rejected in so disdainful sort by her protestant countrymen, the disputes with America obtained some indulgence. When the British ministry contrasted the patient long-suffering of

the catholics, labouring under the most oppressive code of penalties perhaps ever framed, with the refractory spirit of the protestant subject in the transatlantic colonies; when they also behold the submissive temper of the catholic province of Canada, lately conquered from France, and the stubborn resistance of the protestant colonies, founded and cherished into growth by England; they thought government called upon to reward the passive loyalty of the one, with some conciliatory mark of approbation. The first consisted, simply, in a permission to every description of his majesty's subjects to testify their allegiance, and is as follows.

“ Whereas many of his majesty's subjects in this kingdom are desirous to testify their loyalty and allegiance to his majesty, and their abhorrence of certain doctrines imputed to them, and to remove jealousies which hereby have for a length of time subsisted between them and others his majesty's loyal subjects; but upon account of their religious tenets are, by the laws now in being, prevented from giving public assurances of such allegiance, and of their real principles, and good will, and affection towards their fellow subjects; in order therefore to give such persons an opportunity of testifying their allegiance to his majesty, and good will towards the present constitution of this kingdom, and to promote peace and industry amongst the inhabitants thereof, be it enacted by the king's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons in this

present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and after the first day of June, 1774, it shall and may be lawful for any person professing the popish religion, to go before the judges of his majesty's court of king's bench, any justice of the peace for the county in which he does or shall reside, or before any magistrate of any city or town corporate wherein he does or shall reside, and there take and subscribe the oath of allegiance and declaration herein-after mentioned; which oath and declaration such judges of the king's bench, justices of the peace, and magistrates, are hereby enabled and required to administer :

“ I A. B. do take Almighty God, and his only Son Jesus Christ my Redeemer, to witness, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to our most gracious sovereign lord king George III., and him will defend to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatever, that shall be made against his person, crown and dignity; and I will do my utmost endeavour to disclose and make known to his majesty, and his heirs, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which may be formed against him or them; and I do faithfully promise to maintain, support and defend, to the utmost of my power, the succession of the crown in his majesty's family, against any person or persons whatsoever; hereby utterly renouncing and abjuring any obedience or allegiance unto the person taking upon himself the stile and title of Prince of Wales in the life-time of his father, and who since his death is said to

have assumed the stile and title of king of Great Britain and Ireland, by the name of Charles the Third, and to any other person claiming or pretending a right to the crown of these realms; and I do swear, that I do reject and detest, as unchristian and impious to believe, that it is lawful to murder or destroy any person or persons whatsoever for or under pretence of their being heretics; and also that unchristian and impious principle, that no faith is to be kept with heretics; I further declare, that is no article of my faith, and that I do renounce, reject, and abjure the opinion, that princes excommunicated by the pope and council, or by any authority of the see of Rome, or by any authority whatsoever, may be deposed and murdered by their subjects, or by any person whatsoever; and I do promise, that I will not hold, maintain, or abet any such opinion, or any other opinion contrary to what is expressed in this declaration; and I do declare that I do not believe that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign prince, prelate, state or potentate, hath or ought to have any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this realm; and I do solemnly, in the presence of God, and of his only Son Jesus Christ my Redeemer, profess, testify and declare, that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words of this oath, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatever, and without any dispensation already granted by the pope, or any

authority of the see of Rome, or any person whatever; and without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration, or any part thereof, although the pope, or any other person or persons, or authority whatsoever, shall dispense with, or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning. So help me God."

From the commencement of the disputes with America, the history of Ireland becomes more interesting. Since the revolution until then, it had been impoverished by restrictions on trade and manufactures, exhausted by tributes, compulsory balance of trade, and absentee rents. The majority of the nation was ground down, under a code of pains and penalties, exceeding, in inventive malice, the persecutions of the heathens; while the laws to prevent the further growth of popery, were accompanied by those prohibitory and restrictive laws, to prevent the further growth of Ireland, equally affecting the protestant tormentors and the tormented catholics. As the latter was politically extinct, and all power and political influence were confined to the protestant colony, the legislature did not represent the nation, nor even the colony itself, but partially. The boroughs, created by James I. together with other decayed places, the paucity and dependence of electors in many places, filled the house of commons with the creatures of aristocracy and the castle. It had been generally the custom with every Irish administration, to bargain with the heads of this aristocracy for

their support; who, in recompence, obtained the disposal of places of trust and profit, graces and favors; by which means they were enabled to retain their adherents in parliament.

If the Irish legislature represented not the nation, while swayed by the aristocracy, it represented the landed interest; and, occasionally, the will of an English cabinet was eluded or defeated. This was intolerable to those who could not brook a spark of independence in a country, which they considered themselves entitled to rule despotically, as a conquered province. Accordingly lord Townsend was sent as viceroy, commissioned to break the oligarchy, by detaching their adherents from the leaders; which he accomplished, by purchasing the members individually, until he brought the Irish parliament to be as obsequious as the English. What could Ireland expect, from a legislature so constituted. The standard of patriotism was indeed frequently erected there, but the number, that rallied round it, was neither great nor constant. An absentee tax, so desirable for Ireland, was, wonderful to say, recommended by government, during the administration of lord Harcourt, without, however, lending its support to the measure. The opposition of the great holders of Irish lands, on both sides of the water, as well foreseen by ministry, threw it out. Until the American contest, scarcely any thing of value was done for Ireland. An octennial parliament was, after many struggles, obtained, in 1768, without much mending the rotten fabric thereof.

The borough holders were the chief gainers; as the value of a single seat rose thereupon to two thousand pounds.

The impotence of the protestant colonial parliament, to relieve the wretched Irish, could not appear more clearly than in the year 1765, when a scarcity of grain, and failure of potatoes, induced the parliament to pass an act, prohibiting distillation from grain, and the exportation of corn. This bill was sent back, altered by the British cabinet; who inserted a clause, granting his majesty and his Irish viceroy, a power of dispensing with this law; an act, justly attributed to the worst of motives, leaving the people no alternative but famine or insurrection, to oppose the dispensing power. Thus the very people, who brought Charles to the block, among other charges, for assuming a power of dispensing with the laws, assume the same power against the Irish. The bill, thus altered, was opposed, though ineffectually, and passed into a law.

Having thinned the fleeting ranks of changeling patriots, at the expence of the nation, the castle neglected not its usual policy, of vilifying by every art, the few, who firmly adhered to the cause of their country. But one character, at least, was unassailable, by the shafts of calumny or misrepresentation. Dr. Lucas stood high, not only in the estimation of his country, but in that of many, whose measures or political opinions he opposed. His patriotism did not render him unacceptable to his sovereign, nor always to his

viceroy. He was, in particular, respected by lords Hertford, Halifax, Chesterfield, Harrington, Northumberland, &c. He had to bear the mortification, of incessantly struggling in the cause of his suffering country in vain. This eminent and genuine patriot, like others of that rare description, felt the ingratitude of his adored country, as did likewise his distressed progeny.

But in vain were all the efforts of the virtuous few, to defend the rights of a much injured people. To no purpose they proved hostile misgovernment, tyrannic oppression, from the impoverished state of a country, naturally abounding with resources, a rapidly increasing debt, and taxes encreasing as fast. Lavish expenditure of the public money, places, pensions, &c. were incessantly rung in the ears of a corrupt majority, and an enslaved people. Yet, corrupt as these majorities were, there were some cases, in which the castle pensioners resisted its mandates, for instance: two attempts of lord Townsend, in 1769, to pass an act for originating money bills in the English privy council, instead of the commons of Ireland, were defeated; and Woodfall's Public Advertiser, of date Dec. 9, 1769, was ordered by the Irish commons to be burned, by the common hangman, for a libel on their opposition to these ministerial encroachments on their rights. This libel breathes such domineering arrogance, sullen contempt, and determined hostility to the freedom, independence and prosperity of Ireland, as clearly characterize the public, for whose perusal it was printed. "Hiber-

nian patriotism is a transcript of that filthy idol, worshipped at the London Tavern; insolence, assumed from an opinion of impunity, usurps the place which boldness against real injuries ought to hold. The refusal of the late bill, because it was not brought in contrary to the practice of ages, in violation of the constitution, and to the certain ruin of the dependance of Ireland upon Great Britain, is a behaviour more suiting an army of White-Boys than the grave representatives of a nation. This is the most daring insult, that has been offered to government. It must be counteracted with firmness, or else the state is ruined. Let the refractory house be dissolved; should the next copy their example, let it also be dissolved; and if the same spirit of seditious obstinacy should continue, I know no remedy but one, and it is extremely obvious. The parliament of Great Britain is supreme over its conquests, as well as colonies, and the service of the nation must not be left undone, on account of the factious obstinacy of a provincial assembly. Let our legislature, for they have an undoubted right, vote the Irish supplies; and so save a nation, that their own obstinate representatives endeavour to ruin."

Feeble as were these obstacles to British tyranny, they caused a prorogation of parliament successively, during fourteen months, until the members should be so drilled, as to yield more obedience. This prime object being accomplished, at the public expence, the parliament was convened, February 26, 1771, in which the

ministerial phalanx appeared strongly recruited, by the diligent profusion of the viceroy. Most eminent among these mercenary proselytes, was the PATRIOT, Sexton Pery; among the articles of whose bargain were, to be chosen speaker, and raised to the peerage. Addresses, as usual, were prepared, which, besides the ordinary expressions of loyalty to his majesty, conveyed most humble and grateful thanks, for continuing lord Townsend in the government of Ireland. This fulsome address, condemning the preceding sessions, and justifying the viceroy's unconstitutional steps, in discontinuing the sittings, and corrupting the members of parliament, being carried by a majority of 132 against 107, John Ponsonby, the speaker, declining to be the bearer of such an address, resigned the chair, whereupon Edmond Sexton Pery was appointed in his place.

Constituted as the parliament now was, the mandates of the castle were not disobeyed; nevertheless, the patriots were firm in their opposition, and resolved to leave to posterity a memorial of the misgovernment, with which, in all times and circumstances, and in every variety of forms, Ireland was crushed. They moved, "that an humble address be presented to his majesty, expressing, that his faithful commons of Ireland have been always most ready to repose the utmost trust in the persons employed in high authority under his majesty; that therefore his faithful commons did confidently hope, that a law for securing the independency of the judges of this kingdom would have passed: such a law having

been recommended, and promised by his excellency the lord lieutenant, in the speech from the throne, in the first session of his excellency's government. That, in like manner, as his excellency had recommended to that house, in his speech from the throne, in that session of parliament, an attention to the high price of corn, his majesty's faithful commons did flatter themselves, that the tillage of the kingdom would have received encouragement; but that, on the contrary, in a session professedly called for the making and receiving useful laws, his majesty's commons had the unspeakable grief to find, that two laws heretofore enacted, and transmitted, in order to be continued and revived, for the benefit of tillage; one for the restraining of distilleries, the other for a bounty on the carriage of corn coastways, had not been returned, though calculated to meet and correspond with the wishes of government, expressed from the throne, respecting that important article to the community, whereby that kingdom has been debarred of the benefit of two useful laws; the salutary effects of which they had formerly experienced, and which the then existing circumstances of that country, and the morals of the people, peculiarly required. That the suppression of those bills, and the unexpected alteration of others, whereby the hopes of that country, founded in the declarations of his majesty's servants there, had been frustrated, tended to weaken the confidence of the public in his majesty's ministers, so essential to the dignity of the crown, and to the happiness of the subject.

That both public and private credit was in a very low state, that government securities, which used to bear a considerable premium, could not then be circulated at par. That money could scarcely be obtained, and that the price of land was falling. That the circumstances could not fail to be attended by melancholy and anxious apprehensions in the most loyal of his majesty's subjects; and imploring that his majesty would be graciously pleased to take such steps for the remedy thereof, as his royal wisdom and paternal dignity should suggest." This motion was negatived, by 123 against 68.

Sixteen peers did likewise enter their protest, against a paragraph in the address to the king, in praise of Townsend's administration, assigning their reasons for disapproving thereof: namely, misapplication of the public money, subversion of the basis of civil liberty, and other mal-practices.

Lord Townsend's method of disciplining the commons, considerably encreased the national debt; but he was quite satisfied, as he secured a decided majority in the parliament, in support of the English interest, and quite independent of the oligarchy. Notwithstanding his boast of economy, which could not stand without concealing the public accounts, he was obliged, during the fourth session, to apply for aid, to defray arrears, alleged to have been incurred for the public service, though expended in corrupting the legislature. In fact, there was no public service at the time, that justified the arrears. The

only public service of any note was, quelling the commotions of the Steel-boys; a thing done by enforcing the law, and some exertions of the military, without expence to government. The emigration of thousands of them deluded insurgents to North America, was far more detrimental to the nation, than the trouble of suppressing, and contributed to fan the flames of discontent in the colonies.

Truth or justice had little share in the fate of any measure brought before this new-modelled parliament; the chief consideration being, whether government opposed or supported it: for instance, a resolution negatived, “ Be it resolved, that the office of a commissioner of his majesty’s revenue, would be better executed by a person resident in this kingdom, than by an absentee.”

During five years residence as viceroy, the catholics of Ireland received no further favours from his lordship’s humanity, than a less rigid execution of the penal laws. His affection to the protestant interest, is recorded in the act encouraging the conversion of popish priests, by an addition of ten pounds a year to the bounty allowed in the reign of queen Anne. That these bounties should not encroach on the treasury, it was provided they should be levied by grand juries on the counties where such conforming priests had previously resided. Experience has proved the inefficacy of this proselytizing bounty; and the bribed legislators, if not blinded by a belief in the omnipotence of the means, that operated their own conversion to the ministerial

rank, could have seen it. Transitions from the rigid discipline of the catholic church, to the more indulgent, evangelical liberty of the established, encouraged and rewarded by a bounty, put a construction on such conversions, obvious to the most illiterate, depriving them of the effect intended, of drawing the laity after them. Again, if conversions were few, the intent was frustrated; and, if numerous, protestants as well as catholics, would feel and deprecate the burden. Purchased proselytism of pastors, instead of relaxing, invigorate the zeal of the flocks; as all contraries tend to produce each other reciprocally; heat produces cold, rarefaction condensation, and reciprocally.

From the tyranny displayed by the monopolists of the soil, in their legislative capacity, where their imperious spirit of vindictive rule was liable to be somewhat mollified by public opinion, the collision of parties, or the humanity and arguments of some members, it will readily be inferred, that landlords, magistrates and proctors, exercised uncontrolled despotism over the wretched population dispersed over the country, generally unprotected by law, for want of interest and money, more especially papists, victims persecuted by law, whom it was construed loyalty to oppress.

The immoral and wretched state of the times, so late as 1771, is strikingly manifest, by an act passed that session for reclaiming unprofitable bogs. Catholics were indeed allowed to reclaim such bogs; but the restrictions and penal clauses

would deter from the attempt. A tenant might lease fifty acres of such unprofitable bog, with only half an acre of arable land adjoining thereto; free the first seven years, from tithes and cesses; must not be within a mile of a city or market town; depth of it, at least four feet; if half the bog were not reclaimed in twenty-one years, ejectment, &c. The want of such public encouragement for the improvement of barren lands, and unprofitable, i. e. no turf bogs, is here acknowledged; but the spirit of encouragement was stifled by the hatred of popery. Yet this barren act was unpopular, as favouring the persecuted sect.

Lord Harcourt, who succeeded Townsend in 1773, found the parliament so well moulded and obsequious, that he had little else to do, but to move on quietly in the footsteps of his predecessor. This pleasing pliability in the majority, he enjoyed the first session; for on the opposition demanding the public accounts to be laid before the house, an amendment was moved, "as far as there are materials for them;" which was carried by a majority of 88 against 52. This enabled government to conceal all those papers, which would expose the means employed to gain majorities in parliament.

During the administration of lord Harcourt, a regenerating breeze of liberty seemed to refresh and invigorate Ireland, so long languishing in thralldom. The disputes with the American colonies had now broke out into open war. The situation of Ireland bore too much analogy to

that of America, not to excite sympathy and kindred feelings. This analogy was so striking, that it became fashionable to compare these two important dependencies of the empire. Ireland, in fact, had much heavier causes of complaint than the revolted colonies. The former had been founded and cherished by England; the latter was, by a long and various warfare, and perfidious policy, subjugated, depressed, degraded; restricted in manufactures and commerce; exhausted by taxes, and drained by enormous remittances to England. The people could not but feel, that they were ruled with a rod of iron, not for their improvement or advantage, but for their impoverishment and oppression. The British were aware, that the Irish, from a similarity of circumstances, were liable to the infection of colonial discontents, whose influence was increased, by the strong support given to their cause in and out of parliament. These motives influenced the rulers of Britain, to pay some attention to long disregarded Ireland. Some tub must be thrown out to the whale; some trinket, that might gratify the vanity of the dependant, without costing the giver too much. At the time the Americans were excluded from the Newfoundland fisheries, the Irish were licenced, as stated in the British parliament, least it should fall into the hands of their enemies, the French or Dutch. A bill was brought before the Irish parliament, to enable catholics to take mortgages in land for money lent, and leases of lives renewable; but the horrors of popery were not yet

appeased, by the transatlantic gale of liberty, and the bill was lost. They obtained, for that time, barely the permission of testifying their loyalty, by an oath of allegiance. See page 96.

In mentioning, horrors of popery, the term is used, as expressive of an affected bigotry, cloaking tyrannical dispositions. It can hardly be suspected, that the majority of the legislature would be bitter bigots, however they may be corrupt and oppressive to their inferiors. This, as we have seen, was the opinion of Edmund Burke; an opinion justified by an anecdote of a Munster nabob. When the introduction of the Palatines into Ireland was in consideration, he protested, with an oath, that none of them should be his tenants; because every one of them German protestants would consider hisself as good a man as I.

It was prudent, at this juncture, to hold out the patience and loyalty of Ireland, as a contrast to the rebellious colonies; and to show some proofs of an inclination not to let such meritorious passive obedience pass altogether unrewarded, or at any rate unpraised. Hence, the soothing language, accompanying the trivial indulgence of Britain.

Cajoling language and toys, however, were but a poor compensation for a serious blow, struck on Irish commerce, by an unwarrantable stretch of prerogative. An embargo, laid on all the harbours of Ireland, under pretence of withholding provisions from the revolted colonies, deprived Ireland, at once, of the export of her

linen, and reduced her to the greatest distress.

The Opposition, who defended the cause of the Americans, espoused that of Ireland also. It was easy to enlarge on the injurious treatment the unfortunate island, called sister, received from her domineering step-sister. They did, moreover, unfold to public view, the vast advantages accruing to Britain therefrom, even in its crippled, debilitated state. They showed, that the exports of Great Britain to Ireland, amounted to two millions four hundred thousand pounds annually; besides vast sums remitted to absentees, placemen and pensioners, to be spent in England. The maintenance of a large standing army, always ready for the defence of the empire, &c.

In the session of 1775, some inconsiderable favors were conferred on Ireland. Bounties on Irish as well as on British ships, to encourage the Newfoundland fisheries; five shillings per barrel on all flax seed imported into Ireland. This was the more necessary, as all commercial intercourse ceased with the colonies. The Irish, also, were licenced to export provisions, hooks, lines, nets, and tools for the fishery. A bounty to encourage the whale fishery in certain seas, and a drawback on the duty on imported oil, blubber, bone and seal-skin.

The viceroy now thought hisself well entitled to meet an Irish parliament with confidence. He, in the name of his majesty, demanded from the commons, the disposal of four thousand men belonging to the Irish establishment, promising to

supply their place with an equal number of foreign protestant troops. The first was granted; the second, to the great surprise of the castle, rejected by a great majority. The Irish commons soon had another opportunity of showing the British their resolution of not parting with their rights. A bill, granting duties on ale, beer, &c. was returned from England altered, upon which it was thrown out, and another framed.

If a strong party in Britain reprobated the American war on principle, the Irish, from similarity of circumstances, assumed the cause of the colonies as allied with her own. The earl of Effingham acquired popularity, for resigning his commission, that he might not draw his sword against his fellow subjects. He received the thanks of the city of Dublin, and the guild of merchants. The latter published an address of thanks to all the peers who protested against the Restraining bills. The sheriffs and commons endeavoured to obtain the concurrence of the aldermen, in a petition to the king, against the measures pursued with regard to America. On being disappointed, they came to the following resolutions. "Anxious to preserve our reputations, from the odium, that must remain to all posterity on the names of those, who in any wise promote the acts now carrying on in America; and feeling the most poignant grief, as well on account of the injured inhabitants of that country, as on that of our own brave countrymen, sent on the unnatural errand of killing their fellow-subjects:

Resolved, that is the duty of every good citizen to exert his utmost abilities to allay the unhappy disputes, that at present disturb the British empire. Resolved, that whoever would refuse his consent to a dutiful petition to the king, tending to undeceive his majesty, and by which it could be hoped, that the effusion of one drop of subject-blood might be prevented, is not a friend to the British constitution."

The encreasing distresses of Ireland seemed to rouse the energies of the people. In 1776, the debt incurred was near a million, and the deficiency of the revenue that year, was £247,797. Pensions, at the same calamitous period, came to no less a sum than £158,685. Contrary to the example of all other nations, the Irish government had been borrowing in time of peace, while it continued to impose new taxes.

Though the catholics gladly embraced the proffered opportunity, by the act passed in 1774, of wiping off the false title of Irish enemy; and, by testifying their loyalty, of being received among his majesty's faithful subjects; they had the mortification to see an act pass, authorizing their dwellings to be entered, by night or day, for the seizure of arms or ammunition; and of being examined upon oath, if the magistrate suspected they had such concealed. But should they refuse to deliver up, or declare, what arms, &c. they had, hinder their delivery, not discover on oath, or neglect appearing before a magistrate, to be examined, they were to be punished, by fine and imprisonment, or pillored, or whipped.

This year, 1776, the first octennial parliament not being considered pliable enough to the mandates of the castle, having in two instances disobeyed, and made an unwelcome representation of grievances, was dissolved, and another called, which elected the former speaker, Pery, and met not until October 1777. Lord Buckinghamshire, who had been appointed viceroy early that year, met this, with an address more modest than usually came from his predecessors.

There seemed to be, during this reign, a competition, between the depression of the people and the augmentation of the aristocracy. While peerages were multiplied, to corrupt the legislature, petitions flowed in from distressed traders and manufacturers; the unerring evidence of national calamity, produced by misgovernment. The merchants and traders of Cork stated, that they were reduced to extreme misery, by an embargo, laid in November 1776, on all ships laden with provisions for foreign ports, rigorously enforced. That the perishable commodities, of which this beneficial export trade chiefly consisted, were lost, while the trade fell into the hands of other nations. That great quantities of provisions, such as could be preserved, lay on hands. That his majesty's revenue had of course decreased, in proportion to the decay of trade. That the embargo not being essentially necessary or useful, for any public purpose, and so detrimental to the commerce, agriculture and finance of Ireland, ought to be annulled. The manufacturers of Dublin were reduced to such extreme

indigence, that they would have perished by thousands, had they not been relieved by charity. The revenue was so exhausted, by pensions and bribes to unworthy persons, that government could afford no assistance. They were unable to pay their forces abroad, and obliged to borrow money from England, to pay those at home. The expenditure exceeding the revenue £8,000, £166,000 were borrowed in England, on debentures at 4 per cent.: further increase of the drain.

That a resident parliament would be better informed of the wants and wishes of the people, and sympathise more cordially with them, appears from all existing documents. However place and pension could debauch a majority, occasionally national questions were carried; and, even when they miscarried, the minority, by protest or resolutions, entered upon the journals such records, as proved a check to the executive power, and a lesson of political justice to posterity. A national assembly, however imperfectly constituted, or seduced by sectarian faction, or bought at the public expence, must, notwithstanding, be somewhat swayed by public opinion, and have better means of knowing the situation of the nation, and stronger motives for listening to the public voice, than a foreign legislature, in which deputies form an inefficient minority. Emulation, itself, between the two legislatures, might at times benefit the dependency; as appears from the attention given to Irish affairs by the English parliament, in consequence of petitions from the distressed manufacturers of Dublin to

the Irish parliament. It is true, the Irish lost most of the benefits proposed for them, through the intervention of English commercial monopoly pleading against them. Still it cannot be questioned, that the petitions produced an effect in St. Stephens's chapel, that could hardly be expected now from similar claims. The petitions point out the distress of Ireland. That from the woollen, linen, silk and cotton manufacturers, of the city and liberties of Dublin, stated, that the petitioners, from want of trade, were overloaded with goods, for which there was no demand, amounting to upwards of £300,000. That having worked up their capital and credit, and finding no sale for the goods, they had been under the painful necessity of discontinuing employment to the working people, whereby they and their families, to the number of many thousands, were reduced to extreme poverty. That the relief of half a pound of oatmeal or of flour, per day, for each person, had then ceased; the fund, raised by the humanity of the nobility and gentry for that purpose, being nearly exhausted. That the condition of the unemployed poor, their wives and children, was become truly deplorable, which the petitioners humbly laid before that house, hoping for relief only from the wisdom of parliament.

This miserable situation of Irish affairs, caused the absentee landlords to partake, in some degree, of the common calamity. The English house of commons took the trade of Ireland into consideration, and came to the following resolutions:

“That the Irish might be permitted to export directly to the British plantations, or to the settlements on the coast of Africa, all the produce or the manufacture of the kingdom, wool or woollen manufacture only excepted, or commodities of the growth or manufactures of Great Britain, legally imported from that kingdom; as also foreign certificate goods, under the same condition. That all the goods, the produce of any of the British settlements, or of the settlements on the coasts of Africa, tobacco excepted, be allowed to be directly imported into Ireland. That glass, manufactured in Ireland, be permitted to be exported from it, to all places, Great Britain excepted. That cotton yarn, the manufacture of Ireland, be allowed to be imported into Great Britain; and that Irish sail-cloth and cordage should have the same privilege.” Scanty as were these means of relief, they were curtailed, and nearly abolished, by the influence of the domineering nation. For bills being framed agreeable to these resolutions, its trading and manufacturing towns took the alarm. The increase of the trade of Ireland they considered to be, not only prejudicial to their interest, but an encroachment on their rights. The table was covered with petitions against the INDULGENCE to Ireland. Counsel and evidence were heard against it. The supporters and opposers of these bills compromised; and the measure ended, in a trivial enlargement of the linen trade, particularly cheque, and some openings given in the African and West India trades.

Though the votes of the commons, in 1778, prove beyond contradiction, the unjustifiable means used by the English cabinet, to keep this island a depressed, subservient dependency, through the corruption of its parliament, in pensions, sinecure places, the creation of new places, and the revival of old places, become obsolete, because useless; yet all this proves, not, that a foreign legislature was more eligible than a domestic one, for two reasons. First, the means of seduction employed, while it revealed the malignant designs of the seducer, show also, that there existed an Irish interest in that assembly, which, in spite of the vile means employed to subdue it, and to plant an overwhelming English interest on its ruins, sometimes predominated; what cannot be expected in an English parliament. Secondly, because it completed the host of absentee noblemen and gentlemen; one of the greatest diseases of this island.

On the 27th of March, 1778, a message from his majesty to the Irish parliament announced, that a treaty of amity and commerce had been concluded between France and the revolted Americans; and calling for the aid and exertions of his loyal and affectionate Irish subjects. An address of loyalty and affectionate zeal was voted, promising every exertion in their power. Thirty thousand pounds were accordingly voted, to be raised by tontine. But so low was the credit of the Irish government, that no purchaser could be found.

The most important act, passed this session,

which ended on the 14th of August, 1778, was that, which enabled Roman catholics, on taking the oath of allegiance, (see page 96,) to take leases for any term of years not exceeding 999, or any number of lives not exceeding five. To purchase or take by grant, limitation, descent or devise, any lands, tenements, or hereditaments, in this kingdom, and to dispose of them by will or otherwise, descendable, devisable and transferable as the lands of protestants. This act also repealed the penalties for celebrating or being present at mass; for keeping a horse, value £5; from reimbursing losses by privateers. The providing protestant watchmen; the prohibition to dwell in the city or suburbs of Limerick; to teach school publicly, or instruct youth privately, were repealed; and the guardianship, care and tuition of their own children, was restored to them.

In the year 1779, the distresses and discontents of Ireland occasioned some debates in the parliaments. Those interested by their landed possessions there, brought in a motion, granting relief to Ireland by some portion of trade. In vain they argued from principles of policy, as well as justice; the importance of Ireland, as a member of the empire, for augmenting and defending the wealth of England, by her vast remittances, in payment of absentee rent, interest of debt, and British manufactures. Even the confined indulgence of importing sugars direct from the West Indies, could not be obtained. Indeed the poor Irish received leave to plant tobacco and hemp!

But these boons were received with contempt, as mockery on the nation; and the discontents of the people were the more exasperated, by insult superadded to disappointed hope. Associations for the encouragement of Irish manufactures, were entered into. In Dublin, an assembly at the Tholsel, “ Resolved, that the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic opposition, given by many self-interested people of Great Britain, to the proposed encouragement of the trade and commerce of this kingdom, originated in avarice and ingratitude.

“ Resolved, that we will not, directly or indirectly, import or use any goods or wares, the produce or manufactures of Great Britain, which can be produced or manufactured in this kingdom, till an enlightened policy, founded on principles of justice, shall appear to actuate the inhabitants of certain manufacturing towns of Great Britain, who have taken so active a part in opposing the regulations proposed in favour of Ireland; and till they appear to entertain sentiments of respect and affection for their fellow-subjects of this kingdom.”

At Waterford, the high sheriff, grand jury, and many of the most respectable inhabitants, seeing the ruinous state of trade and manufactures, and the decreased value of the staple commodities of the kingdom, considered it an indispensable duty, to their country and themselves, to restrain, by all means in their power, these alarming evils; to effect which, they entered into the following resolutions.

“ Resolved, that we, our families, and all whom we can influence, shall from this day wear and make use of the manufactures of this country, and this country only, until such time as all partial restrictions on our trade, imposed by the illiberal and contracted policy of our sister kingdom, be removed: but if, in consequence of this our resolution, the manufacturers (whose interest we have more immediately under consideration) should act fraudulently, or combine to impose upon the public, we shall hold ourselves no longer bound to countenance and support them.

“ Resolved, that we will not deal with any merchant or shopkeeper, who shall, at any time hereafter, be detected in imposing any foreign manufacture, as the manufacture of this country.”

Similar resolutions being generally entered into, and acted upon, revived the Irish manufactures, and so affected the British, that a disposition to attend to Irish complaints, was excited, different from what Ireland had hitherto experienced.

The house of Bourbon had now united their arms with North America; their combined fleets rode triumphant in the channel. The maritime towns, alarmed, petitioned the king's lieutenant for protection; but received for answer, that he was unable; that sufficient money could not be obtained to raise the militia; and that he had been obliged to beg money from the English ministry, to support the force remaining in Ireland, utterly inadequate to the present crisis.

The people of Ireland consequently resolved to defend themselves. Corps of volunteers were

formed in every part of the kingdom, whose imposing attitude prevented the intended invasion. The weakness and poverty of government, at this critical period ; its dependence on the voluntary exertions of the inhabitants, together with the rising patriotism of the nation, influenced parliament to take the public distress into more serious consideration ; as they evinced, in the following address for commercial freedom.

“ We beg leave humbly to represent to your majesty, that it is not by temporary expedients, but by a free trade alone, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin. And from your majesty’s gracious declaration, a declaration imprinted in our hearts in characters of indelible gratitude, that “ anxious for the happiness of all your people, you will most chearfully co-operate with your parliaments in such measures as may promote the common interests of all your subjects,” we draw the happiest presages, in favour of a measure, essential to the existence of this kingdom, and which appears to us conducive to the interests of Great Britain.

“ Permit us to assure your majesty, that we have every disposition to go as far as the national abilities will, in making a provision for the honourable support of your majesty’s government ; but with hearts glowing with the warmest wishes for the prosperity and glory of the British empire, and full of zeal against the common enemy, we have the mortification to find, that the limited state of our trade and commerce must, by narrowing our resources, set bounds to our libera-

lity, very far short of our earnest inclinations.”

As this was the commencement of the efforts, that procured for Ireland a free trade and free parliament, a brief statement of the debates on the address may not be unacceptable. Mr. Grattan replied to Sir Robert Deane, and Mr. R. H. Hutchinson, who moved an address of thanks to the lord lieutenant, in the servile language of ministerialists, echoing the speech delivered at the opening of the session. “The speech contained nothing satisfactory,” he said; “it meant to quiet the minds of the people, without any declaration whatever. After his majesty had been addressed by his Irish subjects for a free export trade, did such addresses require no answer? Were the people of Ireland undeserving the notice of the British ministers? Was there no respect for the interests of these kingdoms, among the servants of the crown on this side of the water? Were not these servants of the crown also representatives of the people? Why not then speak out? Are our distresses of so private a nature, that they must not be mentioned?..... It is plain we have nothing to expect, since applications from the people, backed with the same from the officers from the crown, are not attended to. Ireland, then, has nothing to depend upon but her spirit; no redress of grievances, no extension of trade, but from the efforts of her people! and will it be politic, will it be safe, here or elsewhere, to oppose these efforts? Why does not our address also speak out? Why have we less spirit than the people? Shall the Commons

of Ireland shew less spirit than the most insignificant corporation? Are we so fallen, so despicable, as to be more afraid of England's censure, than of the cries of our starving manufacturers?

The distresses of this kingdom are two-fold, the beggary of the people, and the bankruptcy of the state. The first, he would not ask the commissioners of the revenue to prove, but he would ask them upon oath, whether the restrictions upon our trade were not the cause? Whether the prohibitions, laid on by England, against the exports of woollen cloths, did not occasion it? Whether there were not too many inhabitants in this kingdom, though not half peopled? Whether those inhabitants, was the American continent still open, would they not have emigrated thither, rather than pine in their native land, the victims of English tyranny; rather than starve in it, by an English act of parliament? And, lastly, was there one rich merchant in the kingdom? This kingdom, ruined by a balance of trade against her for so many years, and the drain of absentees, owes its present existence to associations; it is but a temporary expedient, and something more effectual must be done.

“ As to the bankruptcies of the state, they are the consequence of a system of boundless prodigality, profligacy, and violence; a boundless prodigality, while our means were limited; a profligacy and violence uniformly maintained. One instance will suffice, where the late attorney-general obliged the merchants of Cork to sign an illegal bond, as a collateral security to an

illegal oath. The peace establishment of this poor country, amounts to one-sixth of that of England; what proportion is there in our means? What is this establishment? Infamous pensions to infamous men!..... And will those men, whom we pay, vote against an extension of our trade? vote against the means of supporting them! To what pass have these profligate administrations reduced this kingdom! to be insulted with our poverty, in the speech from the throne; to be told of our beggary; that the officers of the crown here have begged £50,000 from England, or the troops could not have marched into camp; when it is known, that it is this profligacy that has unnerved the arm of government, and made the sword of defence fall in its hand." He then moved, "that we beseech your majesty to believe, that it is with the utmost reluctance we are constrained to approach you on the present occasion; but the constant drain to supply absentees, and the unfortunate prohibition of our trade, have caused such calamity, that the natural support of our country has decayed, and our manufacturers are dying for want. Famine stalks hand in hand with hopeless wretchedness, and the only means left to support the expiring trade of this miserable part of your majesty's dominions, is to open a free export trade, and let your Irish subjects enjoy their natural birth-right."

This amendment was seconded by lord Westport. Several members spoke in the debate, which terminated in the adoption of that proposed by prime serjeant, Hussey Burgh, "that

it is not by temporary expedients, but by a free trade alone, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin."

The address, thus amended, was presented to the lord lieutenant by the speaker; the Dublin Volunteers, commanded by the duke of Leinster, lining the streets, from the parliament-house to the castle.

The debates on the affairs of Ireland, that year, in the British parliament, and the mutual recriminations of the opposite parties, concerning England's treatment of that country, justify the axiom, help yourself, and your friends will like you the better; to which may be added, your enemies will be fewer, and respect you more. The union and spirit of Irishmen then, bid fair to prosper their cause. In the British parliament acknowledged, that they had been an injured people, deserving of relief. To promote this good disposition in the British, the Irish parliament, with equal prudence and ability, granted only a six months money bill; and unanimously resolved, "That the exportation from this kingdom, of its woollen and other manufactures, to all foreign places, would materially tend to relieve its distresses, encrease its wealth, promote its prosperity, and thereby advance the welfare of Great Britain, and the common strength, wealth and commerce of the British empire. That a liberty for this kingdom to trade with the British colonies in America and the West Indies, and the British settlements on the coast of Africa, in like manner as trade is carried on between

Great Britain and the said colonies and settlements, would be productive of very great commercial benefits, would be a most affectionate mark of the regard and attention of Great Britain to our distresses, and would give new vigour to the zeal of his majesty's brave and loyal people of Ireland, to stand forward in support of his majesty's person and government, and the interest, the honour and the dignity of the British empire."

It is now time to observe the effect of the short money bill, on the other side of the water. The minister opened his propositions for the relief of this kingdom, the 13th of December, 1779. To wit, the repeal of the prohibitions, to export Irish manufactures, made or mixed with wool, from Ireland to any part of Europe; to import glass into Ireland, except of British manufacture, or to export glass from Ireland. Also, that Ireland be suffered to carry on a trade of export and import, to and from the British colonies in America and the West Indies, and her settlements on the coast of Africa, subject to such limitations, regulations and restrictions, as the parliament of Ireland should impose.

The first two bills passed with facility; the third, appearing capable of interfering more with British commerce, was laid over till after the holiday recess, to acquire time for studying it.

The people and parliament of this country were much gratified by concessions, from which they expected such mighty advantages. Supplies

for a year and a half were now granted, and £260,000 ordered to be raised by treasury bills or lottery, as the lord lieutenant should direct. The speaker, on presenting the money bills, amidst all his compliments to government, mentioned the true causes, that extorted concession. "Though long depressed by the narrow policy of former times, still to retain such vigour, and at the same time such temper and caution, as animated it (Ireland) to claim, with honest confidence, its rights.... To this state of wisdom and moderation, unexampled in any age or in any country, under similar circumstances..... must be ascribed, the happy restoration of that equitable system of equality in commerce, which has silenced those pernicious suspicions and jealousies, which lately threatened the peace of both kingdoms. But whatever advantages this change in our condition may promise, it will avail us little, if it inspires false hopes and vain expectations of sudden affluence; the future prosperity of this kingdom will depend upon our industry and economy, public as well as private, the effects of which, though certain and permanent, are ever gradual and slow; and unless our expences are regulated by our acquisitions, disappointment will be our portion, and poverty and distress must be the consequence of our conduct."

The concession, however, was attended with a violation of Irish rights. The mutiny bill, passed in parliament for a limited time, when transmitted to England, was made perpetual. Another bill was also altered there. This bitter, humiliating

appendix to commercial regulations, not generally approved of, occasioned much discontent. Petitions flowed in from all quarters, to the Irish house of commons, against the alterations, made by the English privy council in the bills transmitted. As they all breathe one spirit, differing only in language, one may suffice for all. That of Newry stated, “that the petitioners had heard with deep concern, of alterations then said to have been made in the bill, for laying a duty of twelve shillings per hundred weight, on imported refined sugars, and also in the bill for the better regulation of the army; that the duty of twelve shillings appeared to be the lowest, that could possibly be admitted, with the appearance of justice to this country; and, that a perpetual bill, for the regulation of the army, or of any other duration than from session to session, was a daring attack on the constitution of both countries. That petitioners humbly prayed, that, by an equal distribution of justice, the mutual cordiality between Great Britain and Ireland might be ensured, and the necessity for this country to resolve to consume her own manufactures only, might be removed; and, that a parliamentary army might be maintained in Ireland, regulated upon principles such as Great Britain could approve of, and Ireland submit to.”

The altered mutiny bill being taken into consideration, by a committee of the whole house, on the 16th of August, 1780, the arguments of the minority were in unison with the sense of the nation against said alterations. They argued,

“ that the present bill tended to the subversion of all public liberty. That it would not be wise to grant to the Crown a dictatorial power over fifteen thousand men for ever. That it was the wish of the kingdom to be governed by its own laws. That they considered the power of originating this very act, as a declaration of rights: they were consequently contending with the minister of Great Britain, not for any concession, which might wound the interest or pride of the English, but for a measure, which would bring every man in Britain on their side; as they could not wish to see the power of the Crown rendered so dangerous to the constitution of both kingdoms, with a perpetual army, which might vest his majesty with too great an influence over the laws; and that any articles of war, which the king might hereafter make, would be articles of war for this kingdom; for the act extended a power over all his majesty’s forces, by which means Ireland would be under the controul of an English statute, and this kingdom would become a place of arms.” In support of it, it was urged, “ that the peace of the country required it should pass. That as long as parliament held the purse, they could, by refusing to pay, annihilate the army. That the hereditary revenue would be exhausted, if applied to the forces; and, that if the king could raise, he should also have perpetual power to regulate the army.” The weight of gold, not of these flimsy arguments, carried the obnoxious bill.

The discontents arising from passing this, and

the altered bill, called forth several public meetings, and spirited resolutions, condemning the breach of trust committed by the majority. For example, the Merchants' Corps, convened at the Exchange, Dublin, resolved, " that the late decisions of the House of Commons (so destructive, in our opinion, to the constitutional rights, and injurious to the commercial interests of this kingdom) demand the most serious attention of every Irishman. That we consider their consent to the mandate of the British minister, by which the bill for the regulation of the army is made perpetual, and the controul thereof for ever vested in the hands of the crown, as a subversion of the constitution, and a stab to the liberty of the subject. That, considering the army of this kingdom as a body of men embarked in the cause of their country, and equally entitled with ourselves to the protection of its legislature, we cannot but feel for their situation, who, by this law, are in danger of being made, at a future day, the unwilling instruments of despotism, to violate the liberties of Ireland. That we consider the compliance of that house, with the alteration made in the sugar bill by the English privy council, reducing the proposed duty on lump sugars, as an overthrow to the refinery of this kingdom, and a total obstruction to the extension of its manufactures by an export to the British colonies and West Indies. That we will concur with the volunteer corps of this kingdom, and the rest of our fellow subjects, in every effort, which may tend to avert the dangers we are

threatened with. That the strenuous, though unsuccessful efforts, of the minority of the House of Commons, in defence of the constitution, merit the thanks, and firm support, of every friend of his country." Similar resolutions were entered into by other volunteer bodies, the Dublin Independents and Liberty, also by the citizens of Dublin. A non-importation agreement, and the use of Irish manufactures only, seemed now generally determined on.

The parliament attacked the printers of these proceedings, not caring to attack the armed associations. A clause of the 2d of Anne, unfavourable to protestant dissenters, was repealed; foreign merchants and manufacturers, choosing to settle here, were naturalized; and the session closed.

The earl of Carlisle succeeded the earl of Buckinghamshire, and met the parliament, on the 9th of October, 1781. Besides the usual formalities and professions, recommendation of linen manufacture, and protestant charter schools, &c. there is nothing new or interesting in the speech, except an acknowledgment of the spirit and loyalty of the country; and also, though not sufficiently explicit, of the merits and services of the volunteer army. "No event," the viceroy says, "could more contribute to the public security, than the general concurrence, with which the late spirited offers of assistance were presented to me, from every part of this kingdom; and I am fully convinced, that, if necessity had arisen, it was in my power to have called into action

all the strength and spirit of a brave and loyal people, eager under my direction to be employed in aid of his majesty's regular forces, for the public defence." Neither is there any thing interesting in the Address, as usual an echo to the Speech, except the following remarks on the state of the country, expressing rather what ought to be, than what was. "Several attempts have been lately made, and with some success, to establish in this kingdom new manufactures, to revive and improve the old, and to extend its commerce; the lower orders of the people are recovering from their former indolence and ignorance, and the spirit of enterprize and of industry, the great spring of national happiness, begins to diffuse itself through the nation. From these dispositions in the people, and the generous encouragement given to every useful undertaking, by those of higher condition, it seems not too much confidence to hope, that the time is not far distant, when this kingdom will emerge from that state of inaction and languor, into which it was sunk, and that it will assume that rank in the empire which belongs to it, and become one of its principal pillars."

The portion of commercial rights, reluctantly imparted by England to Ireland, was obstructed. The court of Portugal refused to receive Irish manufactures; which was justly attributed to British influence. On the 23d of April, 1781, a meeting of the guild of Merchants was held, to consider of this unprovoked aggression. Some, commissioned for the purpose, contended, that

government, so far from encouraging the court of Lisbon to this prohibition, had, on the first notice, taken the promptest steps to obtain redress; in confirmation of which, two letters of secretary Eden were produced. The meeting ended, by voting thanks to Lord Carlisle and Mr. Eden.

The exertions of these personages, in behalf of Ireland, having proved unavailing, the Irish parliament took it up on the 7th of February, 1782, when the following Address was passed unanimously. “ Most gracious sovereign, we, your majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Ireland, in parliament assembled, beg leave humbly to approach your majesty with sincere professions of that zealous loyalty which will never cease to glow in our hearts, and which we trust will ever distinguish the character of your faithful people of Ireland, and to assure your majesty, that we possess an entire reliance on your paternal protection, which has been happily exerted, during the course of your majesty’s reign, in promoting and establishing the prosperity of this kingdom. With painful reluctance, therefore, at a time when your majesty’s attention is engaged in the most momentous concerns, we yield to the necessity of laying before your majesty, a subject, which deeply affects the commercial rights of this your majesty’s kingdom. Founding our claims upon the faith of treaties, and desirous to promote all the reciprocal advantages of commerce, between this country and the subjects of your majesty’s ancient and faith-

ful ally, the queen of Portugal, we considered that kingdom, in our commercial regulations, as the most favoured nation, and by acts of parliament gave to the wines of Portugal, that advantage over the wines of France, in the imposition of duties, which is described in the treaty of 1703, expecting from the justice of the court of Portugal, that woollen manufactures, sent from this kingdom, would, in consequence, have the same admission which is given to those imported there from Great Britain. We rested this most reasonable expectation, not only on the construction of the treaty above-mentioned, but on the letter and spirit of many ancient treaties, made between your majesty's royal predecessors and the crown of Portugal; and we hoped for a common participation with your majesty's subjects of Great Britain in every branch of commerce with Portugal, which, till now, has never been denied to us in that kingdom. With much surprize, therefore, we have heard, that the entry of our woollen manufactures and printed linens had met with some obstructions at the port of Lisbon. Nevertheless, being satisfied that the zealous and repeated requisitions of your majesty's ministers, strenuously urged, and in a cause so evidently reasonable and just, would be attended with success, we have hitherto refrained from resenting the injury, by commercial regulations restrictive of the trade of Portugal, and by such other effectual means, as the honour and indispensable rights of this kingdom may demand; nor would we then disturb your majesty's atten-

tion by an address upon the subject: but, if we are now to understand, that it is the determination of her most faithful majesty to exclude your majesty's subjects of Ireland from the benefits of the treaty of 1703, or to refuse any relief in respect of the printed linens of this kingdom, it is become our duty to resort to your majesty's protection and powerful interposition, that our manufactures may not be excluded from the ports of one of your majesty's allies, which must at all times be grievous, but peculiarly so, when the common calamity of war has prohibited our commercial intercourse with so many other states. We beg leave, therefore, to approach the throne, earnestly recommending our cause to your majesty's unremitted attention and unabated efforts; and we entreat your majesty to interpose your royal influence with the court of Portugal, in the most effectual manner, that the obstructions to our trade may be removed, and that we may be restored to those commercial rights to which we are entitled."

To this Address, on the 5th of March, 1782, Mr. Eden communicated the answer of his majesty, which stated, that "his majesty is not surprized, that his faithful commons, always attentive to the true interest of this country, should have observed, with alarm and concern, the obstruction given in the ports of Portugal to the importation of Irish woollen and printed linen manufactures into that kingdom; and the full satisfaction which the house of commons express, in his majesty's solicitude upon this important

subject, and in his unremitted endeavours to open the eyes of Portugal, not only to the true sense of the treaties between the two crowns, but to a just understanding of her own real interests, is graciously accepted by his majesty. His majesty applauds the temper and moderation of his commons upon this occasion; such a conduct is always becoming of their prudence and wisdom, but particularly so in the present instance, as it affords time for further exertions towards bringing this business to a happy conclusion; and the house of commons may rest assured, that his majesty will persevere in every possible effort for the attainment of that desirable end."

The attainment of legislative independence, and the relief of the Roman Catholics, occupied the attention of the nation. The ineffectual efforts in parliament, for the rights of Ireland, roused the resentment of the people. The motion of Mr. Grattan, on the 19th of April, 1780, "that no power on earth, save the king, lords and commons of Ireland, had a right to make laws for Ireland," was obliged to be withdrawn, a majority being ready to negative it. "The plain and simple doctrine, that we could not be free, if any power on earth could make laws to bind us, save our king, lords, and commons, quickly prevailed. This became the sentiment of almost every man. It could not be openly, but it was insidiously attacked. These attacks raised many powerful advocates for Irish liberty. The public mind became enlightened; and it was in vain, that the supporters of administration pressed them to at-

tend to their free trade, and relinquish their freedom. With their information, the power of the people was also increasing. A variety of causes all tended to add to the volunteers. The gentlemen who had hitherto taken the most active part, were mostly of what is called the country party. Government, not able to suppress, wished its supporters also volunteers. On this principle many new corps were raised, differing much in political sentiment, but who were to become equally useful to their country. Another cause operated strongly: it became highly fashionable. Volunteer rank was an object of ambition, and it was considered as the most glorious destination of a gentleman, to be at the head of a well-appointed corps. Among the lower orders of men, the smartness of those who had enrolled themselves, became an object of envy and emulation. The idea of glory, which attended it, also had its weight; and every able young man felt ashamed, that he was not amongst the guardians of his country. The fair also, materially served the volunteer cause. Countrymen from being slovenly in their dress, and awkward in their manners, became neat in their persons, and comparatively polished and refined. They were also to be the protectors of their mistresses, and obtained from the softer sex in return an envied precedence. In short, these various causes operated so powerfully, that almost every man who could, became a volunteer. But the volunteers, though powerful, had no fixed object; no bond of union; no communication. Detached in separate companies, they

as yet wanted that connexion, which alone could make them truly beneficial." To remedy this, in the beginning of 1780, a plan of general organization was formed; exercising officers and reviewing generals chosen, and reviews appointed. Their opinions on public affairs were boldly declared; all their resolutions asserting, that Ireland was an independent kingdom, fully entitled to all the uncontrouled rights, privileges, and immunities of a free constitution; that no power on earth, save the king, lords and commons of Ireland, could make laws to bind them; and that they were ready to resist the usurpations and encroachments of any foreign legislature with their lives and fortunes. The Southern Battalion of Armagh Volunteers, commanded by lord Charlemont, on the 28th of December, 1781, unanimously resolved, " That with the utmost concern, we behold the little attention paid to the constitutional rights of this kingdom, by the majority of those, whose duty it is to establish and preserve the same. That to avert the impending danger from the nation, and to restore the constitution to its original purity, the most vigorous and effectual methods must be pursued, to root out corruption and court influence from the legislative body. That to open a path towards the attaining of this desirable point, it is absolutely requisite, that a meeting be held in the most central town of the province of Ulster, which we conceive to be Dungannon, to which said meeting every volunteer association of said province

* Dobbs's History of Irish Affairs.

is most earnestly requested to send delegates, then and there to deliberate on the present alarming situation of public affairs, and to determine on, and publish to their country, what may be the result of said meeting. That as many real and lasting advantages may arise to this kingdom, from said intended meeting being held before the present session of parliament is much farther advanced, Friday, the 15th day of February next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, is hereby appointed for said meeting at Dungannon as aforesaid. That as at said meeting, it is highly probable the idea of forming brigades will be agitated and considered, the several corps of volunteers, who send delegates to this meeting, are requested to vest in them a power to associate with some one of such brigades as may be then formed. Francis Evans, Chairman.

The boldness of these resolutions astonished, alarmed and offended government. Vain were the efforts of the Castle to render the requisition abortive. The representatives of 143 corps assembled in the Church, and adopted the memorable resolutions, drawn up by lord Charlemont, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Flood, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Dobbs.

“ Ulster Volunteers. At a meeting of 143 corps of volunteers, held at Dungannon, on Friday, the 15th day of February, 1782, Colonel William Irvine in the chair. Whereas it has been asserted, that volunteers, as such, cannot with propriety debate or publish their opinions on political subjects, or on the conduct of par-

liament, or public men. Resolved, 1. That a citizen, by learning the use of arms, does not abandon any of his civil rights. 2. That a claim of any body of men other than the king, lords, and commons, of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom, is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance. 3. That the powers exercised by the privy council of both kingdoms, or under colour, or pretence, of the law of Poynings, are unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance. 4. That the ports of this country are by right open to all foreign countries not at war with the king; and that any burthen thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the parliament of Ireland, are unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance. 5. That a mutiny bill, not limited in point of duration from session to session, is unconstitutional, and a grievance. 6. That the independence of judges is equally essential to the impartial administration of justice in Ireland as in England; and that the refusal or delay of this right to Ireland, makes a distinction, where there should be no distinction, may excite jealousy where perfect union should prevail; and is in itself unconstitutional and a grievance. 7. That it is our decided and unalterable determination to seek a redress of these grievances; and we pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, as freeholders, fellow-citizens, and men of honor, that we will at every ensuing election, support those only, who have supported, and will support us therein; and that we will use all constitutional means to make such our pursuit of redress speedy

and effectual. 8. That the right honorable and honorable the minority in parliament, who have supported these our constitutional rights, are entitled to our most grateful thanks; and that the annexed address be signed by the chairman, and published with these resolutions. 9. That four members from each county of the province of Ulster (eleven to be a quorum) be, and are hereby appointed a committee till next general meeting, to act for the volunteer corps here represented, and, as occasion shall require, to call general meetings of the province. 10. That said committee do appoint nine of their members to be a committee in Dublin, in order to communicate with such other volunteer associations in the other provinces, as may think proper to come to similar resolutions, and to deliberate with them on the most constitutional means of carrying them into effect. 11. That the committee be, and are hereby instructed, to call a general meeting of the province, within twelve months from this day, or in fourteen days after the dissolution of the present parliament, should such an event sooner take place. 12. That the court of Portugal had acted towards this kingdom, being a part of the British empire, in such a manner as to call upon us to declare, and pledge ourselves to each other, that we will not consume any wine of the growth of Portugal; and that we will, to the extent of our influence, prevent the use of said wine, save and except the wine at present in this kingdom, until such time as our exports shall be received in the kingdom of Por-

tugal, as the manufactures of part of the British empire. 13. That we hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion, to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves. 14. Therefore, that as men, and as Irishmen, as Christians, and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects; and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland. 15. That the Dundalk Independent Troop of Light Dragoons, commanded by Capt. Thomas Reed, having joined a regiment of this province, the First Newry Regiment, or Newry Legion, and petitioned to be received as part of this body, and under its protection, is accordingly hereby received. 16. Whereas a letter has been received by the chairman of this meeting, from the united corps of the county of Cavan, Colonel Ennery in the chair, declaring their readiness to co-operate with their brother volunteers in every constitutional support of their rights. Resolved unanimously, that the thanks of this meeting be presented to the said united corps of the county of Cavan, for their spirited resolution; and that a copy of the proceedings of this meeting be inclosed by the chairman to Colonel Ennery, to be by him communicated to the said united corps; and that they shall have a right, if they choose, to associate with the corps represented at this meeting, to nominate four members to act with those already appointed, as a committee by the delegates at this meeting. 17. That the thanks

of this meeting be presented to Captain Richardson, and the Dungannon Light Company, for their politeness in mounting guard this day. 18. That the thanks of this meeting be presented to the Southern Battalion of the first Ulster Regiment, commanded by the Earl of Charlemont, for that patriotic zeal, which we are convinced induced them to call this meeting. 19. That the thanks of this meeting be presented to Colonel William Irvine, for his particular propriety and politeness of conduct in the chair. 20. That the thanks of this meeting be presented to Captain James Dawson, for his readiness in undertaking the office of secretary to this meeting, and for his particular attention and ability in the laborious duty thereof. 21. That these resolutions be published."

To the Right Honorable and Honorable the Minority in both Houses of Parliament, they published the following Address. "My Lords and Gentlemen, we thank you for your noble and spirited, though hitherto ineffectual efforts, in defence of the great constitutional and commercial rights of your country, Go on! the almost unanimous voice of the people is with you; and in a free country the voice of the people must prevail. We know our duty to our sovereign, and are loyal. We know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be free. We seek for our rights, and no more than our rights; and, in so just a pursuit, we should doubt the being of a Providence, if we doubted of success."

The Ulster national committee being imme-

diately chosen, resolved, “ that the corps of this province, not represented at the meeting held this day, be, and they are hereby invited to join in the resolutions of said meeting, and to become members of the said association on the most equal footing.”

“ As these resolutions made their public appearance, they were admired even by their enemies. The volunteers from every quarter paid their tribute of applause, and erected them as the standard, to which all repaired: from east, west, north, and south, they were re-echoed. Committees of correspondence were formed, and the national committee crowned the business.”*

A more universal, more warm and spirited concurrence, in favour of liberty, than that which now pervaded this island, is not to be found, even from the earliest period, in the history of any nation in the world. Two days after the memorable resolutions at Dungannon, the Independent Dublin Volunteers agreed to the following resolutions and preamble. “ Natural justice and equity having established the universal rights of mankind upon an equal footing, the inhabitants of Ireland have a claim to a Free Trade with all nations in amity with Great Britain; yet their ports have been kept shut, their trade has been monopolized, and their industry has but served to aggrandize the proud traders of a neighbouring kingdom. Necessity, which compels to ingenuity, has lately held up that trade, dignified with the specious name of Free; yet, trade,

* Plowden's Historical View, &c.

which enriches industrious nations, serves but to impoverish the natives of this kingdom, because they have purchased at a high price, an illusion. Defrauded thus of their birth-right, there is nothing left but economy as a counterpoise. The unsubstantial freedom of commerce, having originated from the united spirit of the people against the use of foreign manufactures, the same spirit, which procured the fallacious grant, may yet, by a persevering unanimity, establish a real, permanent and substantial trade. Therefore, resolved, that these our thoughts and opinions be laid before our countrymen, reminding them, at the same time, that not only they, but their posterity, are interested in the event; and, that to do away effectually the yoke of monopoly, a non-consumption and non-importation agreement should be entered into without delay."

A few days afterwards, the Lawyer's Corps resolved, "that we do highly approve of the Resolutions and Address of the Ulster Volunteers, represented at Dungannon, on the 15th of February inst. That, as citizens and volunteers, we will co-operate with the several corps, whose delegates met at Dungannon, in every constitutional mode of obtaining a redress of the grievances mentioned in their resolutions."

A week had not elapsed since the Dungannon meeting, till Mr. Grattan again endeavoured to cause the Irish parliament to assert their independence. "After the ample discussion," said he, "in this house, of the present question of right on the 19th of April, 1780, and the uni-

versal reprobation of the assumption of the British parliament, to bind this kingdom, then received, I had been silent on that subject, if that parliament had not since that time continued its tyrannical and unconstitutional assumption, by enacting several laws to bind Ireland, which I have in my hand, as also a proclamation in the Irish Gazette, where the execution of a British statute is enforced: measures that evidently shew, that the British nation, so far from relinquishing the claim of usurped authority in this kingdom, have still the same spirit of making laws for us, which they keep alive by renewing their claim on every occasion. These fresh instances of British usurpation, added to that disgraceful and unrepealed act of the 6th of George I. which declares Ireland bound at all times by the legislature of Great Britain, makes it necessary at this time for the parliament of Ireland to come to an explanation concerning its privileges, and the injured rights of the nation. And what are the boasted regulations Britain has granted to us? The first was in 1778, as contemptible in principle as in effect; for after a bar of lawyers had been brought to plead against Ireland in the English House of Commons, we are permitted to export every thing except our manufactures. Their favour was an insult and aggravation to our misery. The minister sends over to know the causes of our distresses; and he is answered from his agents here, that it was done away, and that we were satisfied by being permitted to cultivate tobacco. The second period was in 1779,

when government abdicated the defence of Ireland, and Ireland appeared in arms; the minister now changed his tone, he glanced a temporary gleam of hope upon our shields; he gave us every thing, but kept the power of taking it back; he retained a mutiny bill and the post-office act. The third period was a ministerial address of thanks, evidently calculated to dissolve the union of the people; it had its effect in a paroxysm of ease, and when it was known, that the strength of this house was dissolved, and that the glory of 1779 was no more, an order comes over to oppose on every occasion the latent claims of Ireland; to oppose an Irish mutiny bill, to alter the sugar bill; and when lord Hillsborough found you had lost all veneration for yourselves, he lost it for you likewise. The reprobated measure of a perpetual mutiny bill followed; but you have not done with it yet, you have stabbed your country, and the wound is festering. Emboldened by your dissolution, English acts binding Ireland were passed last winter. Is the claim of the British parliament to legislate for this kingdom given up, as I have heard some gentlemen say in this house? How futile and ridiculous now do these arguments appear, that declared the return of the Irish mutiny bill was a renunciation of legislation on the part of England. How futile and absurd are all the arguments, that teemed on that occasion from the government press? I am for tranquillity; it is for honorable tranquillity; but when I see an administration, unable to make a blow against an enemy,

tyrannize over Ireland, I am bound to exert every power to oppose it.

“ Ireland is in strength; she has acquired that strength by the weakness of Britain, for Ireland was saved when America was lost: when England conquered, Ireland was coerced; when she was defeated, Ireland was relieved; and when Charles-town was taken, the mutiny and sugar bills were altered. Have you not all of you, when you heard of a defeat, at the same instant, condoled with England, and congratulated Ireland?

“ If England were for a moment awake to her own interests, she would come forward, and invite us to her arms, by doing away every cause of jealousy. How, but by the strictest domestic union, can Great Britain, with only eight millions of people, oppose the dreadful combination of seven millions in Spain, with twenty-four millions in France, and two in Holland? Will she cast off three millions of brave and loyal subjects in Ireland, at so critical and eventual a time?

“ An Irish army, the wonder of the world, has now existed for three years, where every soldier is a freeman, determined to shed the last drop of blood to defend his country, to support the execution of its laws, and give vigour to its police. The enemy threaten an invasion, the Irish army comes forward, administration is struck dumb with wonder, their deputies in their military dress go up to the Castle, not as a servile crowd of courtiers attending the lord lieutenant's levee, but as his protectors, while the

cringing crowd of sycophants swarm about the treasury, and, after having thrown away their arms, offer nothing but naked servitude.

“ You are now losing the British constitution, which by compact you were to possess; two councils, with more than parliamentary power, dependent judges, a mutiny bill lost, and governors like the Roman pro-consuls in distant provinces, are sent over to fleece you.

“ A general election is shortly to take place; what will be your answer to those, who have sent you hither, when you resign your delegated trust, and they ask you, where are our rights? Where is our sugar bill? Where our mutiny bill?

“ What will be the consequence of your not explaining your rights now? When a peace happens it will then be too late; your island will be drained of its people, the emigrants will say, let us prefer freedom in America to slavery at home, and cease to be his majesty's subjects here, to become his equals there. Let us not therefore suffer the same men, whose infamous arts were reprobated in America, to succeed here.” He then moved an Address to his majesty,

“ To assure his majesty, of their most sincere and unfeigned attachment to his majesty's person and government.

“ To assure his majesty, that the people of Ireland were a free people; that the crown of Ireland was a distinct kingdom, with a parliament of her own, the sole legislature thereof.

“ To assure his majesty, that by their fundamental laws and franchises, which they on the

part of this nation claimed and challenged as their birth-right, the subjects of that kingdom could not be bound, affected, or obliged, by any legislature, save only the King, Lords, and Commons, of that his majesty's realm of Ireland; nor was there any other body of men, who had power or authority to make laws for the same.

“ To assure his majesty, that his majesty's subjects of Ireland conceived, that in that privilege was contained the very essence of their liberty, and that they tendered it as they did their lives, and accordingly had with one voice declared and protested against the interposition of any other parliament in the legislation of that country.

“ To assure his majesty, that they had seen with concern, the parliament of Great Britain advance a claim to make law for Ireland, and their anxiety was kept alive, when they perceived the same parliament still persist in that claim, as might appear by recent British acts, which affected to bind Ireland, but to which the subjects of Ireland could pay no attention.

“ To assure his majesty, that next to their liberties, they valued their connexion with Great Britain, on which they conceived, at that time most particularly, the happiness of both kingdoms did depend, and which, as it was their most sincere wish, so should it be their principal study to cultivate and render perpetual. That under that impression, they could not suggest any means, whereby such connexion could so much be improved or strengthened, as by a renunciation.

of the claim of the British parliament, to make law for Ireland, a claim useless to England, cruel to Ireland, and without any foundation in law.

“ That impressed with a high sense of the magnanimity and justice of the British character, and in the most entire reliance on his majesty’s paternal care, they had set forth their right and sentiments, and without prescribing any mode to his majesty, throw themselves on his royal wisdom.”

The Attorney General (afterwards Earl Clonmell) declared the object of the motion utterly impracticable. He said he did not mean to agitate the question of right; the act of the 6th of George the First was certainly of little ornament upon the statute book, and of still less use; yet if it gave nothing to England, it certainly took away nothing from Ireland. After endeavouring to terrify, by the phantom of the resumption of the forfeited estates, so successfully introduced by Mr. Fitzgibbon, in the debate on the Catholic bill, he animadverted on the introduction to the motion; and said, if an ambassador from France or Spain, or if the boldest agents for the rebels of America, were at the bar to urge the house in language such as that, he should not be much surprised; for it ill accorded with the loyal and liberal feelings of Irishmen, who scorn to take advantage of an enemy in distress, but always remember acts of friendship with gratitude; he was therefore against the address, because it would give the world an opportunity of saying, Ireland had made demands on Great Britain, and

was in arms to enforce them. He was against it, because it was a challenge, though couched in terms of civility; because it tended to anarchy and misrule; because the thing contended for could never gain strength but by struggle; and because, if obtained, it would shake all the property of the nation. Upon those principles he thought it an honor to oppose the address in any way; but from respect to the honorable mover, he would not give it a direct negative, but move to have it put off to the first of August; which was carried, 137 voting for the attorney general's motion, and 68 against it.

The attempt of Mr. Flood, to obtain an acknowledgement of the independence of Ireland upon the British legislature, met a similar fate, on the 26th of the same month. After stating the rights of Ireland, he moved the following declaratory resolutions: 1. That the members of this house are the only representatives of the people of Ireland: 2. That the consent of the commons is indispensably necessary to render any statute binding. The second, he said, he would not move till the first was determined upon. It was objected, that universal coincidence of opinion on this subject, and the universal acknowledgement of the great truth, which was the substance of the resolution, made the motion unnecessary, and if it were necessary, it was unadvisable. The resolution was negatived; only 76 supporting the declaration, and 137 against it.

This obstinate opposition, far from disheartening, roused the nation to greater exertions,

Grand juries, cities, towns, corporations, parishes, all ranks and degrees of men, animated by the same sentiments, with united voice, spoke out boldly in behalf of the privileges of their country. The Freemen and Freeholders of the City of Dublin, convened by the High Sheriffs, on the 19th of March, 1782, unanimously agreed to the following Address to their representatives, Sir Samuel Bradstreet, Bart. Recorder, and Travers Hartley, Esq.

“ Gentlemen, as men justly entitled to, and firmly resolved to obtain a Free Constitution, we require you, our trustees, to exert yourselves in the most strenuous manner, to procure an unequivocal declaration, “ That the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make laws to bind this country.” And we solemnly pledge ourselves to you and to our country, that we will support the representatives of the people at the risk of our lives and fortunes, in every constitutional measure which may be pursued for the attainment of this great national object. Be assured, Gentlemen, that your zeal upon this occasion will insure you a continuance of our esteem and regard.”

Sir Samuel Bradstreet returned the following answer. “ Gentlemen, it has ever been my wish to receive with pleasure, and to obey the instructions of my constituents. You may depend on my using every means in my power to procure an explicit and unequivocal declaration, “ That the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make laws to bind this

country;" and I rely on your solemn engagement to support your Representatives, in every constitutional measure which may be necessary for the attainment of this great national object. Permit me to assure you, that my zeal for the accomplishment of your wishes, can be equalled only by my desire to convince you, how sacred I esteem the trust you have reposed in me, and how much I value a continuance of the good opinion of my fellow-citizens."

"Gentlemen," says Travers Hartley, Esq. "I should be very unworthy of that honorable and important trust, with which you have so recently invested me, did I not receive with the highest respect, the most perfect satisfaction, and cheerful conformity, your instructions, on a subject in which the national honor and security are essentially engaged. To suppose that any power, except that of the "King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, is competent to make laws to bind this kingdom," is utterly inconsistent with the idea of freedom; it is equal liberty alone, which can secure that perfect harmony to the subjects of the same crown, so necessary to the prosperity both of Great Britain and Ireland. You may rely, Gentlemen, on every exertion I am capable of, to procure an unequivocal declaration of the sole right of the legislature of this kingdom, to enact laws obligatory on the people of Ireland; and I doubt not in this, and every constitutional measure, I shall be always secure of the support of my constituents. Your instructions, on this occasion, will give a dignity to the vote you have

entrusted me with, which it must have wanted, if considered as merely proceeding from my own private judgment."

The Grand Jury, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Galway, convened by the High Sheriff, on the 31st of March, 1782, unanimously resolved: 1. That a seat in parliament was never intended by our constitution, as an instrument of emolument to individuals; and, that the representative, who perverts it to such purpose, particularly at so momentous a period as the present, is guilty of betraying the trust reposed in him by the people for their, not his benefit. 2. That the people, who could tamely behold their suffrages made the tool of private avarice or ambition, are still more criminal than the venal representatives, as they become the panders without even the wages of prostitution. 3. That when we daily see the mandate of the minister supersede all conviction in debate; when placed and pensioned members of parliament notoriously support in public, measures which they condemn in private; when the hirelings of corruption avow, and government have exemplified in recent instances of distinguished public characters, that to vote according to conscience, amounts to a disqualification to hold any office in the service of our country, it is time for the people to look to themselves, and in great national questions to assert their right to controul those who owe their political existence to their birth, and may be annihilated by their displeasure. 4. That, at an æra when every thing that

can be dear to a nation is at stake, we are called upon by our duty to ourselves, to our country, and to posterity, to stand forth, and by the most unremitting exertions stem the returning torrent of corruption at home, and resist usurpation from abroad, that all mankind may see we are determined to preserve the purity, while we vindicate the rights, of our legislature. 5. Therefore we do hereby solemnly pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, by every tie of honor and religion which can be binding to man, that, as the sacred duty which we owe to the community supersedes all ties and obligations to individuals, we will not suffer private friendship or private virtues, to ward our settled determination not to vote for any man, at a future election, either for county, town, or borough, who shall act in opposition to our instructions, and who will not subscribe a test to obey them previous to the election, or who shall absent himself when those questions on which we instruct him are agitated in parliament. 6. That the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to make laws to bind this kingdom, and that we will resist the execution of any other laws with our lives and fortunes. 7. That, if ‘force constitutes right,’ the people of this country have a right to use force against the man who dares to maintain doctrines subversive of their constitution; but as the object* is beneath the

* Mr. John Scott, attorney-general, afterwards Earl Clonmell. In the Commons, when the patriots demanded, By what right England made laws to bind Ireland? he shamelessly supported the usurpations of the British Legislature, answering, that ‘Power gave Right.’

national resentment, we shall only bid such a man beware how he hereafter trifles with the rights of his country, and provokes the vengeance of a people determined to be free. 8. That we highly approve of the Resolutions of the Volunteer Delegates, assembled at Dungannon and Ballinasloe. 9. That the thanks of this county be returned to the Minority in Parliament, and particularly to our countrymen, Sir Henry Lynch Blosse, Anthony Daly, and Robert Dillon, Esqrs. 10. That the following Addresses be presented to the Right Hon. Denis Daly, and W. P. Keating Trench, Esq. representatives in parliament for this county.

To the Right Hon. D. Daly.—Sir, there is a moment in the affairs of nations as well as of individuals, which, if seized and happily improved, may lead to prosperity, if neglected, may terminate in the riveting of its oppressions. Such a moment is the present: the eyes of Europe are upon us, and posterity will read our conduct with applause or execration, according to the use we make of the opportunities, which a providential combination of events has afforded us. When the rights of a nation become objects of public question or discussion, not to assert is to relinquish, to hesitate is to betray. The die is cast; if we advance with a manly and determined step, we ensure success; if we recede or divide, we sink for ever; in so awful an hour, who is the man, that, however unwilling to provoke the question, will not in the day of trial be found at his post? Your private opinion, Sir, must give way to the national voice; the assemblage of

qualities, which formed and elevated your character, raised you to one of the most exalted situations a subject could arrive at. Your abilities remain, we have relied on your integrity; yet, we cannot but lament, that at the moment we stood in need of all the influence of such a character, its brightness should have been shaded, and its weight lost to the nation, by being placed in a station in which, however chaste, it may, at least, be suspected. But waving at present the consideration of this subject, we now call upon you, as one of our representatives, as you value our future approbation and support, to give your fullest assistance to the following measures, whenever they shall be proposed in parliament, viz. ‘A declaration of our national rights; an ademption of the assumed power of the privy council to stop or alter bills; a mutiny bill limited in its duration; a bill rendering the judges independent of the crown; and a bill to reduce the expences of this nation to a level with its revenues;’ as we cannot conceive a conduct more insane, than for a people scarce emerging from ruin, like a profligate heir, to anticipate its funds, and ground certain extravagance on uncertain prosperity.

To W. P. Keating Trench, Esq.—Sir, the present period calls upon every man in this country, to take an active and decided part in the common cause. The nation is not now to be trifled with. Upon our conduct at this eventful hour, depends the establishment of our constitution, and the liberties of unborn generations.

We shall not, Sir, suffer our attention to be drawn from the great object in which we are engaged, by a retrospect into your past parliamentary conduct, however dissonant in many points from our opinions; but we call upon you, if you value our future approbation, to give your fullest support to the following measures, whenever they shall be agitated in parliament, viz. ‘A declaration of our national rights; an ademption of the power of the privy council to stop or alter bills; a mutiny bill limited in its duration; a bill to render the judges independent of the crown; and a bill to reduce the national expences to a level with its revenues.’

The University, on the 2d of April, agreed to, and presented, the following Address to their representatives, the Right Hon. Walter Burgh, and John Fitzgibbon, Esq., afterwards Earl of Clare.—Gentlemen, When the murmurs of a people, struggling for their rights, have been heard even in the quiet retreat of science, we should deem it a breach of duty to our countrymen and ourselves, did we neglect to second their virtuous exertions: we are never forward in political contests; we shall always be decided and steady; although we have not been the first to complain of, yet, we have not been the last to feel the repeated injuries this country has suffered, not only from those who may have separate duties and separate interests, but from men, who are bound by the strongest duty, and their dearest interest, to vindicate its rights, and cherish its prosperity.

The power of binding Ireland by acts of a foreign legislature, is what nothing but a spirit of arrogance or oppression would insist upon, nothing but the most abject servility submit to; for we cannot suppose, that the appearance of a claim which irritates the whole body of the people, would be retained, unless there was an intention of enforcing this claim hereafter; we are therefore convinced, that an express declaration of rights, is the only measure upon which this country can build its legislative independence, and that a reluctance to assert the constitution of the land, may furnish Great Britain with a pretence for denying the justice of our requisition.

We do not think the present situation of Great Britain to be any objection against such a declaration, as we can never suppose that she could derive strength from our weakness, or any security to her liberties from the oppression of ours; and that time is undoubtedly to be preferred for the assertion of our rights, when the object is likely to be obtained with the least struggle.

The insecure attachment of Ireland to the crown of England at a former period, furnished a pretext for divesting the houses of parliament of their right to originate bills, unless previously certified into England under the great seal of this kingdom; now, as the loyalty of this country for several centuries past, so often tried, and so often acknowledged, has removed every cause of distrust, we conceive that this injurious and humiliating restriction should also cease.

The dependance of the judges of Ireland on the will of the sovereign, may, in the hands of an aspiring monarch, prove a powerful instrument of oppression; now, holding ourselves entitled to every constitutional security which our sister kingdom possesses, we consider it necessary that the judges of this kingdom should be made equally independent with those of Great Britain.

But since every advantage which could result from these reformatations must be precarious, as long as a perpetual mutiny bill exists, by which, force may be made to supercede right, and the soldiery of Ireland are subjected to trial and punishment by any future articles of war, which the king and privy council of Great Britain may think proper to adopt; we are persuaded, that every concession must be imperfect, unless accompanied by the repeal of so dangerous a law.

We therefore expect you will exert your most strenuous efforts, to obtain a declaration of the rights of Ireland; a repeal or satisfactory explanation of the law of Poynings'; an act for making the tenure of the judges independent of the crown; and a repeal of the perpetual mutiny bill.

We declare, that these are our fixed and unalterable sentiments, and we are convinced that nothing short of the requisitions herein contained, can be, in any degree, satisfactory to the people of Ireland.

It is our wish to render the connexion between this country and Great Britain as close and per-

manent as possible, and we are persuaded that this is only to be accomplished by abolishing all usurped authority of the one over the other, and removing every invidious distinction between the constitutions of two countries, equally entitled to be free.

To this address the following answers were returned:

To the electors of the University. Gentlemen, when I reflect on my past parliamentary conduct, it affords me the highest satisfaction, to find that it entirely corresponds with the tenor of your instructions. Whenever the objects that you recommend have come into discussion, I have given them my uniform and decided support. My conduct has been founded upon principles, which no motives of interest or ambition have been able to shake, and in which I shall persevere unto the last hour of my life. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, gentlemen, your most faithful humble servant, Walter Burgh.*

To the Electors of Trinity College. Gentlemen, I am just now honoured with your instructions, which have been forwarded to me by post. Be assured, that I shall always feel the utmost satisfaction in receiving the instructions of that very great and respectable body which I have the honour to represent, and that you shall ever find me ready, to the best of my ability, to vindicate your rights.

I have always been of opinion, that the claim of the British parliament to make laws for this

* Afterwards lord chief baron of the court of exchequer.

country, is a daring usurpation on the rights of a free people, and have uniformly asserted this opinion both in public and private. - When a declaration of the legislative right was moved in the house of commons, I did oppose it, upon a decided conviction that it was a measure of a dangerous tendency, and withal inadequate to the purpose for which it was intended. However, I do, without hesitation, yield my own opinion upon this subject to yours, and will, whenever such a declaration shall be moved, give it my support.

With respect to an explanation of the law of Poyning, I confess, the more I consider the subject, the more difficult it appears to me. Allow me to remind you, that the University did, upon a very recent occasion, experience that this law, in its present form, may operate beneficially. A total repeal of it, will I hope, on consideration, appear to you to be not, by any means, a desirable object. You may rest assured, that the best attention which I can give to the subject shall be exerted; and I trust and doubt not, that upon a communication with you upon this topic, I shall be able to give you full satisfaction.

I agree with you most warmly, that any advantage which we may derive from reformation must be precarious, so long as the articles of war shall continue to be a permanent and established branch of municipal law, which they certainly are under the present act for regulating the king's army in Ireland. I have no doubt in my mind, that a perpetual mutiny law, lays the

foundation of a military government in this country; upon this principle I did oppose it as strenuously as I could, from the first moment it was introduced into the house of commons, and upon this principle I will, whilst I live, make every effort within my power to procure a repeal of it. The administration of justice in this country is certainly an object of the first importance, and therefore I will, at all times, concur in any measure which can be proposed to make the judges of the land independent and respectable. I have the honour to be, gentlemen, with great respect, your most obedient, and very humble servant, John Fitzgibbon.*

The voice of the people, at length, was attended to; the British ministry, was changed, lord Carlisle recalled, and the duke of Portland appointed his successor.

On the 9th of April, 1782, Mr. Fox, communicated to the British house of commons, the following message from his majesty:

“ George R. His majesty being concerned to find, that discontents and jealousies are prevailing among his loyal subjects in Ireland, upon matters of great weight and importance, earnestly recommends to this house, to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a final adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms. G. R.”

On the 14th of April, the duke of Portland arrived in Dublin. Parliament met on the 16th. The Right Hon. Hely Hutchinson, secretary of

* Afterwards earl of Clare and lord chancellor of Ireland.

state, on the chair being taken, delivered a similar message to the house of commons; then congratulated his country on it; avowed, that he had always asserted from the seat of judicature, as a judge; and in that house, as a representative of the people, the right of the king, lords and commons of Ireland, only, to make laws for Ireland. After a merited eulogium on Mr. Grattan, he said, that whatever mode should be proposed for the declaration of this right, in terms the most unequivocal and explicit, whether by vote, address, or bill, should receive his strongest support, provided it contained such sentiments of duty and loyalty to the king, and affection to our fellow-subjects of Great Britain, as every man in this nation felt.

Mr. George Ponsonby moved, that a dutiful and loyal address should be presented to his majesty, thanking him for his most gracious message, and assuring him, that his faithful commons would immediately proceed upon the great objects he had recommended to their consideration.

Mr. Grattan rose, to state to the house his reasons for changing, in some measure, the form of the address proposed by the hon. gentleman, and hoped to induce the house, rather to declare that they had considered the causes of jealousy; and that they were contained in his original motion for a declaration of rights, which he would now move as an amendment to the address. He said he had nothing to add, but to admire by what steady virtue the people had asserted their

own rights. He was not very old, and yet, he remembered Ireland a child. He had watched her growth; from infancy she grew to arms; from arms to liberty. She was not now afraid of the French; she was not now afraid of the English; she was not now afraid of herself. Her sons were no longer an arbitrary gentry; a ruined commonalty; protestants oppressing catholics, catholics groaning under oppression—but she was now a united land.

Turn to the rest of Europe, you will find the antient spirit every where expired. Sweden has lost her liberty, England is declining; the other nations support their consequence on the remembrance of a mighty name, but ye are the only people who have recovered it by steady virtue. Ye not only excel modern Europe, but ye excel what she can boast of old. Whenever great revolutions were made in favour of liberty, they were owing to the quick feeling of an irresistible populace, excited by some strong object presented to their senses. Such an object was the daughter of Virginus—sacrificed to virtue; and such the seven bishops, whose meagre and haggard looks expressed the rigour of their suffering: but no history can produce an instance of men like you, musing for years upon oppression, and then, upon a determination of right, rescuing the land. You will find that the supporters of liberty in the reign of Charles I., mixed their sentiments of constitution with principles of gloomy bigotry; but amongst us, you see delegates of the north, advocates for the catholics of

the south; the presbytery of Bangor mixing the milk of humanity with the benignity of the gospel—as christians tolerant—as Irishmen united. This house agreeing with the desires of the nation, passed the popery bill, and by so doing got more than it gave; yet found advantages from generosity, and grew rich in the very act of charity. Ye gave not, but ye formed an alliance between the protestant and the catholic powers, for the security of Ireland.

Fortunately for us, England did not take the lead; her minister did not take the lead in the restoration of our rights; if she had, we should have sunk under the obligation, and given back in sheepish gratitude the whole advantage; but the virtue, the pride of the people was our resource, and it is right that people should have a lofty conception of themselves; though it is wonderful they should preserve their ancient pride, not having amongst them any of those outward and visible signs of glory, those monuments of their heroic ancestors, such as were wont to animate the ancient Greeks and Romans, and rouse them in their country's cause. They had nothing, such as these, to call forth the greatness of the land, and therefore it is astonishing, that they should proceed with a temper seldom found amongst the injured, and a success never but with the virtuous. They have no trophies, but the liberty they transmit to their posterity is more than trophy. What sets one nation up above another, but the soul that dwells therein? for it is of no avail, that the arm be strong, if the soul

be not great. What signifies it, that three hundred men in the house of commons—what signifies it that one hundred men in the house of peers, assert their country's liberty, if unsupported by the people? But there is not a man in Ireland, there is not a grand jury, there is not an association, there is not a corps of volunteers, there is not a meeting of their delegates, which does not maintain the independence of the Irish constitution, and pledge themselves to support the parliament in fixing that constitution on its rightful basis. Gentlemen will perceive, that I allude to the transaction at Dungannon; not long ago, the meeting at Dungannon was considered as a very alarming measure; but I thought otherwise, I approved of it, and considered the meeting of Dungannon as an original transaction. As such only it was matter of surprize. What more extraordinary transaction than the attainment of Magna Charta? It was not attained in parliament, but by the barons, armed and in the field. A great original transaction is not founded in precedent, it contains in itself both reason and precedent; the revolution had no precedent, the christian religion had no precedent, the apostles had no precedent.

In this country every man has a share in the government, and in order to act or speak they must confer. Now, did not necessity compel them to act, did not necessity compel them to speak, and will not their resolutions tend to restore the rights of their country; they resolve, “that a claim of any body of men, other than the king,

lords and commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom, is unconstitutional and a grievance. After further observations, Mr. Grattan said, that he wished to become the decided friend of the duke of Portland, for removing every cause of complaint from Ireland, and that these were the terms on which he was ready to support his government.

A repeal of the 6th of George I., including a restoration of the appellant jurisdiction on the Lords of Ireland.

An abolition of the unconstitutional power of Privy Councils.

And a repeal of the Mutiny-bill.

A Judge's-bill he refrained from mentioning, as he had heard it was returned. He concluded by moving, which was unanimously adopted,

“ That an humble address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of this house for his most gracious message to this house, signed by his grace the lord lieutenant.

“ To assure his majesty of our unshaken attachment to his majesty's person and government, and of our lively sense of his paternal care, in thus taking the lead to administer content to his majesty's subjects of Ireland.

“ That thus encouraged by his royal interposition, we shall beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before his majesty the cause of our discontents and jealousies: to assure his majesty, that his subjects of Ireland are a free people; that the crown of Ireland is an imperial crown, inseparably annexed to the crown of

Great Britain, on which connexion the interests and happiness of both nations essentially depend; but that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct kingdom, with a Parliament of her own, the sole legislature thereof; that there is no body of men competent to make laws to bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, nor any other parliament which hath any authority or power, of any sort whatsoever, in this country, save only the parliament of Ireland. To assure his majesty, that we humbly conceive that in this right the very essence of our liberties exists; a right, which we, on the part of all the people of Ireland, do claim as their birth-right, and which we cannot yield but with our lives.

“ To assure his majesty, that we have seen with concern certain claims advanced by the parliament of Great Britain, in an act entitled an act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland: an act containing matter entirely irreconcilable to the fundamental rights of this nation. That we conceive this act, and the claims it advances, to be the great and principal cause of the discontents and jealousies in this kingdom.

“ To assure his majesty, that his majesty’s commons of Ireland do most sincerely wish, that all the bills which become law in Ireland, should receive the approbation of his majesty, under the great seal of Britain; but that yet we do consider the practice of suppressing our bills in the council of Ireland, or altering the same any where, to be another just cause of discontent and jealousy.

“ To assure his majesty, that an act, entitled an act for the better accommodation of his majesty’s forces, being unlimited in duration, and defective in other instances, but passed in that shape from the particular circumstances of the times, is another just cause of discontent and jealousy in this kingdom.

“ That we have submitted these the principal causes of the present discontent and jealousy of Ireland, and remain in humble expectation of redress.

“ That we have the greatest reliance on his majesty’s wisdom, the most sanguine expectations from his virtuous choice of a chief governor, and great confidence in the wise, auspicious and constitutional councils, which we see, with satisfaction, his majesty has adopted.

“ That we have, moreover, a high sense and veneration for the British character, and do therefore conceive, that the proceedings of this country, founded as they are in right, and tempered by duty, must have excited the approbation and esteem, instead of wounding the pride of the British nation.

“ And we beg leave to assure his majesty, that we are the more confirmed in this hope, inasmuch as the people of this kingdom have never expressed a desire to share the freedom of England, without declaring a determination to share her fate likewise, standing and falling with the British nation.”

To give the British ministry time to adopt the measures necessary for granting the demands of

Ireland, the house of commons adjourned for three weeks. This some of the members considered too long; in the debate, Mr. Fitzgibbon, as also many of the hitherto most zealous opposers of the rights of Ireland, expressed himself thus: "that as he had been cautious in committing his country, so now that it was committed, he would be firm in supporting its rights." And, that as the right of making laws to bind Ireland, lay in their King, Lords, and Commons, to the total exclusion of all foreign influence, it was idle to suppose, that any appeal ought to lie from the Irish courts of law.

The attorney-general, afterwards earl Clonmel, said he was persuaded, that if after what had passed and been pressed by so many respectable gentlemen of consideration and distinction, he should remain silent, there was not a man in that house, who would not attribute it to fear, paltry fear of losing his office and situation; he had, he confessed, heretofore protracted, postponed, palliated, and endeavoured to soothe the country from declarations or acts of extremity; his sentiments had been much misrepresented to his disadvantage; but he was not surprised or offended, that the nation, eager in the pursuit of a favourite object, should have considered any man, who seemed to differ from them in sentiment, as an object of detestation and resentment. He thought it better, that every object of those British laws should be doomed to destruction, than that his country should longer even be supposed to be in a state of slavery; he therefore called the atten-

tion of the house, to bear witness, that by holding a mysterious or equivocal silence longer upon the subject of right, he should do equal injury to the interests of Great Britain and Ireland. He did, consequently, as a lawyer, a faithful servant to the crown, a well-wisher to both countries, and an honest Irishman, in the most unqualified, unlimited, and explicit manner, declare his opinion, that Great Britain had no right whatsoever to bind Ireland by any law; and that such acts as had been passed for that purpose in Great Britain, were founded in usurpation, or the necessity and confusion of the times; that he never had a doubt upon the question of right, though from motives of prudence, and a desire of peace, he had heretofore thought it necessary not to declare any opinion upon the question of right. Their conduct during the present American war, entitles them, he said, to more than they asked. Another event, which had lately happened, and made it necessary for him to speak out, was Mr. Wallace's bill, offering freedom to America. This act operated as an act of pains and penalties to the loyalty of Ireland; for if America be declared free, and Ireland left in slavery, no man of either spirit, sentiment, or property, would remain in the country an hour after America should have been declared independent. Ireland would become the absolute sink of the universe, the only part of the British dominions, which could not boast the freedom of the British constitution. As the friend of Great Britain and Ireland, he thought it necessary to express these

sentiments boldly: for if in his situation he were longer to continue silent, it might be thought in Great Britain, that there was yet a diversity of opinion in Ireland.

The English Lords and Commons, on the 17th of May, resolved, “ that the act of the 6th of George I. intituled, An act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland upon the crown of Great Britain, ought to be repealed; and Mr. Fox brought in a bill for that purpose.

The lord lieutenant, on the 27th of May, acquainted parliament, that Great Britain had acceded to the claims of Ireland. Mr. Grattan then moved the following Address of thanks, and assurance of the complete satisfaction with which Ireland received the boon just conceded.

“ To assure his majesty of our unfeigned affection to his royal person and government; that we feel most sensibly the attention which our representations have received from the magnanimity of his majesty, and the wisdom of the parliament of Great Britain.

“ To assure his majesty, that we conceive the resolution for an unqualified, unconditional repeal of the 6th of George I., to be a measure of consummate wisdom and justice, suitable to the dignity and eminence of both nations, exalting the character of both, and furnishing a perpetual pledge of mutual amity.

“ To assure his majesty, that we are sensibly affected by his virtuous determination to accede to the wishes of his faithful people, and to exercise his royal prerogative in a manner most con-

ducive to their welfare; and accordingly we shall immediately prepare bills to carry into execution the desires of his majesty's people, and his own most benevolent purposes.

“ That, gratified in those particulars, we do assure his majesty, that no constitutional question between the two nations will any longer exist, which can interrupt their harmony; and that Great Britain, as she has approved of our firmness, so may she rely on our affection.

“ That we remember and do repeat our determination, to stand and fall with the British nation.

“ That we perceive with pleasure the magnanimity of his majesty to disclaim the little policy of making a bargain with his people; and feeling with pride the confidence he reposes in the good faith, generosity and honour of the Irish nation, we answer with all humility, that his majesty entertains a just sense of our character. Common interest—perpetual connexion—the recent conduct of Great Britain—a native affection to the British name and nation, together with the constitution which we have recovered, and the high reputation which we possess, must ever decide the wishes, as well as the interest of Ireland, to perpetuate the harmony, stability, and glory of the empire. Accordingly, we assure his majesty, that we learn with singular satisfaction the account of his brilliant successes in the East and West Indies, gratified at one and the same instant in our dearest wishes, the freedom of Ireland, and glory of Great Britain.

“ That we cannot omit expressing our gratitude to his majesty, for appointing the duke of Portland to the government of this kingdom.

“ That we are convinced his representations were faithful, vigorous, and beneficial. We are acquainted with his character, and relying on his upright and frugal administration, make no doubt that a free people, and uncorrupt parliament, will unite to give a constitutional chief governor decided support.

“ That we have presumed to lay before his majesty our genuine sentiments on the change of our situation. His majesty will receive them as the voluntary unstipulated tribute of a free and grateful people.”

This Address, after some debate, was carried by 211, four only opposing it. No wonder it should; for the objections to it were nugatory. Whatever further could be done for Ireland, might and ought to have been done by the Irish parliament and people, unrestrained, as they now were, by any interference of England.

The exulting temper of the nation was manifested in the remainder of the session of parliament, and the Addresses of the Volunteers. Fifty thousand pounds was voted to Mr. Grattan, for his patriotic exertions, and £100,000, to raise seamen. The Habeas Corpus act was enacted; the Sacramental Test abolished; the Judges rendered independent; the Mutiny-bill limited; Poyning's law repealed; the Bank of Ireland established, but with an illiberality, as surprising as unjust, amid the triumphs of Ire-

land, for no catholic was allowed to fill the humblest station in it. The unrepealed English laws, affecting Ireland, received the sanction of the Irish legislature; by which the catholics were first deprived of seats in parliament, by an Irish statute. A bill, for the further relief of Roman Catholics, also received the royal assent. By it, they were enabled to purchase or take by grant, limitation, descent or devise, lands, tenements, or hereditaments, and dispose of them by will or otherwise, descendable, deviseable and transferable, as the lands of Protestants. The penalties for being present at, or celebrating mass; for keeping a horse above five pounds value; compelling them to make good losses sustained by the depredations of privateers; and the prohibitions of inhabiting the city and suburbs of Limerick; of being schoolmasters, or private tutors, were repealed. The guardianship, care and tuition of their children, was restored to them. This bill was introduced by Mr. Gardiner (lord Mountjoy), and ably supported by Mr. Walshe, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Forbes, Sir Hercules Langrishe, and Major Hely Hutchinson, whose opinions, at this day, are interesting.

Mr. Gardiner observed, that as the penal laws then stood, it was impossible for any man, who had not the statute-book by rote, to know exactly what disqualifications catholics laboured under; he therefore wished to have this single law relative to them, that their rights and their incapacities being exactly defined therein, they might upon every occasion resort to it, for the govern-

ment of their conduct. It had been said, that papists were safe from penal laws, so long as the generous and merciful disposition of their countrymen disdained to put them into execution; but no law ought to remain on the statute-book, which was not executed; if it was too bad to be executed, it ought to be expunged. He divided the indulgence, which he thought ought to be granted to Roman Catholics, into five heads: the first, respecting their enjoyment of property; the second, the free exercise of religion; the third, regarded their education; the fourth, marriage; and the fifth, self-defence. He then proceeded to consider the clauses empowering Roman Catholics to take, purchase, and enjoy. To this it was proposed by other members to add, “to have, hold, and inherit estates in fee-simple, except advowsons, and lands to which a right of making seneschals was annexed, or any burgage or borough-right, by which members might be returned to serve in parliament.”

Mr. Walshe. The subject now before the committee is, in my opinion, of the first magnitude; it is a subject of the very last importance to this country, and merits a very serious discussion indeed. The question now is, whether Ireland shall stand as a powerful, as a respectable, and as a flourishing kingdom, in the eyes of all the world; or whether we shall continue in our present impotent and impoverished situation; distracted and divided among ourselves, with at least two millions of our countrymen and fellow-

subjects living in a state of absolute vassalage, incapacitated from serving themselves, or from serving their country.

The bill on your table is, for the relief of your majesty's Roman catholic subjects of Ireland. I think I may then say, with propriety, that it is a bill for the relief of at least two millions of our countrymen, loyal to the constitution, and loyal to the prince. They have proved themselves such, on some very trying and recent occasions. For I will not go back to Magna Charta, to enquire what religion the barons were of, who won that great charter of our liberties—those barons, who won that constitution, which is at once the envy and admiration of the world—let it be for the gentlemen who oppose the bill to say, that they were not Roman catholics. I cannot conceive upon what principle of sound policy, or upon what idea of constitutional liberty, the present heads of a bill can possibly be opposed.

These heads of a bill tend to a repeal of the popery-laws of this kingdom; a code of laws, I am bold to say, the most sanguinary, the most persecuting, that ever appeared in the statute books of any free country; a code of laws, the very existence of which, at this day, is, in my opinion, a reproach to the good sense of parliament.

These heads of a bill look to this great object, that of uniting in cordial affection, and in interest, all classes and all denominations of men in this country. This bill wishes, that every individual in this kingdom should be interested in its

prosperity. This bill wishes, that every man may have some property on board the bark, and that no man may stand an indifferent spectator, whether she sinks or swims. This bill has for its object, the bringing into action, nay, I may say into life, two millions of men, who, in fact, have been dead to society, who have been an absolute burden, and a clog on the industry of their native country. But above all, these heads of a bill look to this great and truly patriotic object—that of making us a people—a great, a powerful people—by uniting the sons of Ireland in one common interest, and in one common cause, for her prosperity. It is an established maxim, that the riches and consequence of a country consist in the number of its inhabitants. And yet, I am sorry to say, that Ireland, at this day, proves the truism of the maxim, by being an exception to the rule: for the Roman catholics of Ireland, in number about two millions, so far from adding either to the riches, or to the consequence of this country, are a burden and a dead weight on its industry, and must inevitably continue so, so long as the popery laws remain unrepealed.

Ireland, from its situation, should be as flourishing and as happy a country as any under the sun. Ireland is surrounded by fruitful coasts—she possesses the safest harbours—she enjoys a temperate climate, and is blessed in the fertility of her soil—and yet Ireland is, at this day, as far behind other nations, as to arts and industry, as she is beyond them in point of natural advantages.

It may be asked, why Ireland, with all those natural advantages, should be so far behind other nations in arts and industry? The answer is obvious—the popery laws are still alive! Those laws, which render torpid and useless to this country, two millions of its inhabitants. The wealth of a country must ever be in proportion to the skill and industry of its inhabitants: the sure way to make men industrious is, to let them enjoy the fruits of their industry. As industry increases, manufactures must necessarily flourish; therefore, the great object of the legislature should be, to excite industry by employing the people; not to continue laws, which render the bulk of the people a burden to the state.

The obvious interest of Ireland, at this hour, is to grant to religious dissenters, their civil privileges, which may annex them to the civil government; not to continue persecuting laws, which must necessarily estrange them from it. I would not be understood to say, that the popery-laws, when made, were not necessary to the protection of its civil constitution; but, this I will say, that the motives which then induced the necessity of those laws, have long since ceased to exist. These laws have outlived their time, and, in my opinion, a longer continuation of them, circumstanced as this country now particularly stands, must be its inevitable ruin.

It will not be denied, I believe, that the conduct of the Roman Catholics of this country, for a series of years, has been that of obedience to the laws, and attachment to the established

government. Why then continue, unnecessarily, those penal laws, which absolutely involve two thirds of our fellow-subjects—which deprive them of the rights of men, and cut them off from any benefit of a free constitution? Can any laws be more unwise, than those, which restrain the Roman Catholics, not from evil, but absolutely from doing good—laws, which absolutely prohibit industry, by tying up the hands of two millions of men from co-operating with the public, in the public service?

I will suppose, merely for argument, that the Roman Catholics are not so well attached to us from principle as could be wished, will any gentleman then say, that a continuation of those popery-laws will be a probable mode of winning the affections, or insuring the attachments of this unfortunate class of people—unfortunate indeed, when doomed to vassalage in a country of freedom, and treated as aliens in their native land?

The wisest man, who, I believe, has ever written on the subject of legislation, (I mean Baron Montesquieu) treating on the very subject now before us, that of penal laws as to religion, says, that penal laws as to religion, have never produced any other effect than that of making the objects of them more persevering: says he, “The sure way to win the zealots in any religion is, to court them by favours—by the conveniencies of life—by hopes of fortune. It is an established rule as to the changing of religion, that the invitations to the change must ever be more strong than the penalties.”

Have not the very laws we are now discussing, proved the wisdom of his judgment? Can it be presumed, that these popery-laws (if unrepealed) can produce other, or more salutary effects for the time to come, than they have produced for near a century past—that of misery to individuals, and impotency to the state.

Since, then, the iron hand of penal law has proved ineffectual, why not endeavour to wed the Roman catholic to us from motives of self-interest. The happiness of every state depends upon the common interest of the subject, not on uniformity of opinion as to this or that religion. If Roman catholics are permitted to purchase lands, they must necessarily become sincere supporters of the established government. They then become wedded to it, by the strongest of all ties, that of self-interest. The security of self-interest is the support of every government. Will it be argued, that the greater the stake a man has to lose by the subversion of that government under which he lives, the more he is to be suspected as an enemy to it? Or that the less a man is interested in the welfare of the state, the more he is to be confided in? Surely this is too absurd a doctrine to be entertained for an instant. A Roman Catholic, by purchasing lands, enters into security for his good conduct. He (if I may use the expression) enters into a kind of recognizance for his loyalty to the state.

By permitting Roman catholics to purchase, you annex their loyalty to the soil; by that means it becomes stable and permanent; whereas,

at present, the property of Roman catholics is totally personal; it is a kind of fugitive property, which may almost instantly be transferred from one country to another. If sound policy and good sense have not heretofore told us to repeal those laws, the present times, the very critical situation of the British empire, furnish a decisive reason for repealing them at this day. England has wisely repealed her popery laws.

In this liberal and enlightened age, when almost all the powers of Europe have resigned religious policy to public interest—when toleration, the darling child of benevolence and of wisdom, has been adopted in the place of persecution, that dreary offspring of blind prejudice and hoary bigotry—when reason has re-assumed her throne—shall Ireland alone continue enveloped under that dark cloud of deep-rooted prejudice and baseless apprehension? Shall she alone be blind to her own interest, while all Europe hang out a lure to the Roman catholics of this country to emigrate—to depopulate their native land? Shall we sit dormant and inactive, while the remedy is within our reach? There is no man who will voluntarily banish himself from his native country. Every man, who has the feelings of man, must have a natural affection for that country which gave him birth. Nothing but cruelty and oppression can oblige him to part it—he is wedded to it by every tie of affection, by every tie of connexion.

But if the present heads of a bill shall be rejected, can any man hesitate to say, that every

Roman catholic, who possesses the spirit of a man, and who does not prefer vassalage and slavery to liberty and freedom, will not immediately transport himself, his family, and his property, to another country; into a country where he may participate of the blessings of a free constitution, and enjoy the rights of a freeman?

Mr. Grattan.—I object to any delay which can be given to this clause; we have already considered the subject on a larger scale, and this is but a part of what the clause originally contained. We have before us the example of England, who four years ago granted Catholics a right of taking land in fee; the question is, merely, whether we give this right or not, and if we give it, whether it shall be accompanied by all its natural advantages. Three years ago, when this question was debated in this house, there was a majority of three against granting Catholics estates in fee, and they were only allowed to take leases of 999 years; the argument then used against granting them the fee, was, that they might influence elections. It has this day been shewn, that they may have as effectual an influence by possessing leases of 999 years, as they can have by possessing the fee; at that time, I do declare, I was somewhat prejudiced against granting Roman Catholics estates in fee, but their conduct since that period has fully convinced me of their true attachment to this country. When this country had resolved no longer to crouch beneath the burden of oppression, that England had laid upon her—when she

armed in defence of her rights, and a high spirited people demanded a free trade, did the Roman Catholics desert their countrymen? No; they were found amongst the foremost. When it was afterwards thought necessary to assert a free constitution, the Roman Catholics displayed their public virtue; they did not endeavour to take advantage of your situation—they did not endeavour to make terms for themselves—but they entered frankly and heartily into the cause of their country; judging, by their own virtue, that they might depend upon your generosity for their reward. But now, after you have obtained a free trade, after the voice of the nation has asserted her independence, they approach this House as humble suppliants, and beg to be admitted to the common rights of men. Upon the occasions I have mentioned, I did carefully observe their actions, and did then determine to support their cause whenever it came before this House; and to bear a strong testimony of the constitutional principles of the Catholic body. Nor should it be mentioned as a reproach to them, that they fought under the banner of king James, when we recollect, that before they entered the field, they extorted from him a Magna Charta, a British constitution.

In the reign of Charles II. a committee, consisting of Papists, Protestants and Presbyterians, were sent from this country, to prosecute lord Stafford, we find them perfectly agreeing in the object of their mission; and, indeed, when men begin to differ upon principles of religion, it is

because they have no other great object to engage their attention; we cannot give the people of Ireland a common faith, but we can give them a common interest.

In 1799, when the fleets of Bourbon hovered on our coasts, and the nation roused herself to arms, did the Roman Catholics stand aloof? or did they, as might be expected from their oppressed situation, offer assistance to the enemy? No—they poured in subscriptions for the service of their country, or they pressed into the ranks of her glorious Volunteers.

It has been shewn, that this clause grants the Roman Catholics no new power in the state; every argument, therefore, which goes against this clause, goes against their having leases for 999 years—every argument, which goes against their having leases of 999 years, goes against their having leases at all—and every argument, which goes against their having property, goes against their having existence in this land.

The question is now, whether we shall grant Roman Catholics a power of enjoying estates, or whether we shall be a Protestant settlement, or an Irish nation? Whether we will throw open the gates of the temple of Liberty to all our countrymen, or whether we will confine them in bondage by penal laws? So long as the penal code remains, we never can be a great nation; the penal code is the shell in which the Protestant power has been hatched, and now it is become a bird, it must burst the shell asunder, or perish in it.

In Holland, where the number of Roman Catholics is comparatively small, the toleration of their religion is an act of mercy to them; but, in this country, where they form the great bulk of the inhabitants, it is an act of policy—an act of necessity—an act of incorporation. The question is not, whether we shall shew mercy to the Roman Catholics, but whether we shall mould the inhabitants of Ireland into a people; for so long as we exclude Catholics from natural liberty and the common rights of men, we are not a people; we may triumph over them, but other nations will triumph over us. If you love the Roman Catholic, you may be sure of a return from him; but if you treat him with cruelty, you must always live in fear, conscious that you merit his just resentment; will you then go down the stream of time, the Roman Catholic sitting by your side un blessing and un blessed, blasting and blasted? Or will you take off his chain, that he may take off yours? Will you give him freedom, that he may guard your liberty?

In Ireland, as connected with England, the indulgence we wish to give to Catholics can never be injurious to the Protestant religion; that religion is the religion of the state, and will become the religion of Catholics, if severity does not prevent them. Bigotry may survive persecution, but it never can survive toleration. But gentlemen, who speak of the enormities committed by Catholics groaning under a system of penal laws, do not take into account the enlightening and the softening of mens' minds by toler-

ation, nor do they consider, that, as they increase in wealth, they will increase in learning and politeness.

I give my consent to the clause in its principle, extent, and boldness; I give my consent to it, as the most likely means of obtaining a victory over the prejudices of Catholics, and over our own—I give my consent to it, because I would not keep two millions of my fellow-subjects in a state of slavery; and because, as the mover of the Declaration of Rights, I should be ashamed of giving freedom to but six hundred thousand of my countrymen, when I could extend it to two millions more.

Sir Hercules Langrishe supported the clause, because he observed, it was plain, simple, and easily understood. We have shewn how readily Roman catholics, possessed of leases for 999 years, may, by collusion, acquire the fee; the question, therefore, ceases to be a question of policy, whether you will make them a liberal grant of property, and allow them to possess legally and openly what they may acquire in a clandestine manner. Gentlemen will also consider, that, by allowing catholics to possess the fee of lands, they for ever bar the claim of old proprietors, and interest every catholic who enjoys such possession in the support of the established government. A gentleman says, he wishes to give catholics property, but would restrain them from having power, lest they should influence elections: for my part, I entertain little apprehension from their having any power in elections, the in-

fluence arising from landed property is the only influence that can ever be injurious to the country. But the same person says, that few Roman catholics set their lands to protestant tenants, if so, then they can have no freeholders on their estates—I leave, therefore, the inconsistency of those two arguments to answer each other.

Mr. Forbes.—I will not impute to gentlemen who urge the adjournment, an intention to destroy the bill; yet it is somewhat strange they should persist in it, when every man of profession knows that the clause may be guarded by a proviso as far as may be necessary. I was at first alarmed at what was said, till I considered more attentively. I find, upon reflection, that were we to alter the clause in the manner desired, it would allow catholics to acquire estates, but would convey destruction to them—it would say, we give you power to acquire the fee of lands, but we cannot trust you with the rights appertaining to the fee, because in time to come you may destroy our constitution. If this be our opinion, let us not grant them any thing at all. By all the acts, which the tyranny of the last age devised, a Protestant was not prohibited from settling on the estate of a Catholic—the scheme of the hon. gentleman who spoke last but one, would effectually prohibit them—it would not only be oppressive to catholics, but a punishment to such protestants as should settle on their lands. The great object of the penal laws was to break the power of papists in Ireland; that object they accomplished, but they also ruined and destroyed

the country. Bishop Burnet tells us, the scheme was totally to root out and banish Catholics from Ireland, and to plant Palatines, and other foreign Protestants, in their place: but the superior wisdom of the present age, considering mens' faith as a concern purely their own, attempts to bind catholics to the state by benefits, and to obtain by generosity what we could not accomplish by force. Nothing can be more ridiculously spiteful than the attacks formerly made upon catholics. You will find upon your journals, a petition from the Protestant coal-porters of Dublin, complaining of a certain Darby Ryan, a Papist master coal-porter, for employing a number of Papists in that trade. You will find a complaint against Sir C. Phipps, for having been present at a musical entertainment, where one Christian, who had formerly been a domestic of the Pretender, performed on the violin. It was alleged, that Sir C. had listened to the tune of a song known by these words, "The king shall have his right." There was some dispute about the tune, and the house, in order to judge whether their member had been guilty of a treasonable act, ordered his accuser to whistle the tune in question, and gravely sat to determine by the music.

Major Hely Hutchinson.—From the example of a former session, and the fears of gentlemen of the best intentions, he was not so much surprised at the opposition the first clause of the bill had met with; but he hoped, that no man would object to the doing away that part of the Popery laws, which related to religion and education: a

system of laws, disgraceful, impolitic and unjust; so disgraceful, that you were ashamed to execute them; so impolitic, that you dared not do it. Those laws have remained on your statute books for eighty years, in profound and sullen silence, insulting the Roman catholic, grating his feelings, upbraiding his policy, and dishonouring the justice of the protestants of Ireland. By one law, it is enacted, that any Roman catholic, going himself, or sending any other person abroad to be educated, shall be disabled from prosecuting any suit or action at law; shall forfeit all his personal property, and the profits of all his lands during life. By another law, there is a penalty on any Roman catholic who shall keep a public school. Now, Sir, as a Roman catholic cannot receive an education at home, and dare not receive it abroad, the parliament, that passed this law, has said, we, in contradiction to the principles that have actuated other wise governments, enact by a law, that a great majority of our people are to receive no education at all. We mean to convert them from a false to a true religion, by establishing ignorance, the mother of superstition. We say to the parent, you shall not, in conformity to the dictates of God and nature, educate your child; you shall not teach him the duties of an honest man, or the obligations of a virtuous citizen, though we demand from him, that he shall respect laws he can only know, because they have trampled upon him, and venerate a constitution, that has put him out of its pale, and doomed him to perpetual ignorance. If such

have not been the consequences, if the Roman catholic has been wretchedly ignorant, if he has not been reduced to the most contemptible state that any human creature can possibly be in, your efforts have not been wanting to make him so. But those laws have been fortunately overwhelmed by the pressure of their own weight; they have had that fate which every law must have, enacted by a legislator, who, descending from his tribunal, forgetting that nature has set limits to his power, shall convert himself from a law-giver into a persecutor. The cruelty of the law has been the antidote of the poison; it has not been executed: humanity has lifted up her voice and forbid the attempt.

In short, gentlemen, you are called upon to pass this law, by the example of every other enlightened nation in Europe; who, convinced of the unavailing cruelty of religious persecution, have said to their subjects, in the words of the Roman emperor, "take the ladder, and climb up your own way to Heaven." You are called upon by the dismembered situation of the British empire, requiring the firmest union of all the remaining parts: you are called upon, by the most salutary, yet most painful of all lessons, your own experience, which tells you, that by a system of pains and penalties, you only rivetted the obstinacy, armed the pride, and oftentimes banished, the gallant Roman catholics of this country into the service of a foreign prince, to publish our infamy, and his glory, wherever he went. If a protestant should say to a Roman

catholic, why have you persevered so obstinately in a religion, certainly not so pure as mine? He might reply to him, if in your government I had found any thing but persecution and oppression, in your laws any thing but cruelty, I might not have been inattentive to your call. But how have you endeavoured to convert me—not by the voice of persuasion—but by the cruel rigour of your law, which armed every generous passion of the human breast against you. You have refused me any stake in this my native land; you forbid me to educate my child; the hand of the executioner has been raised against the man, who would unite your offspring to mine—force is the clumsy supporter of a bad cause, truth and reason despise such an assistant. It has been said by gentlemen, in the course of this debate, that what has been done, and is now doing by other nations, does not apply to the situation of Ireland; I acknowledge it does not exactly; but I will tell you what applies, and applies forcibly, the history of eighteen centuries; they tell us, that persecutions, punishments, and even death itself, have been found insufficient to conquer religious obstinacy; for this plain and simple reason, the man suffering in defence of his religion, thinks that he is securing eternal happiness hereafter; the less interest sinks into the greater. Human laws can therefore be of no avail: he glories in their rigour; he exults in his punishment—it has been well and truly said of the superstitious man, that his feet alone are on the earth, but his head is in Heaven.

Permit me now to exhort you, by that manly spirit of freedom, which taught you to demand your right from another country, not to suffer yourselves to be reproached, that, while you were clamorous for your privileges as a nation, you refused to restore a great majority of your fellow subjects to their liberties as freemen, and to their great common law rights, as members of the British constitution. Unite with the Roman catholics—you will become a great people, formidable to your enemies, respected by Great Britain—remember the old political axiom—

“*Concordia Res parvæ crescunt,
Discordia maximæ dilabuntur.*”

On the 27th of July, 1782, his excellency the lord lieutenant concluded the session with the following speech from the throne:

“ My lords and gentlemen—The great and constitutional advantages you have seen secured to your country, and the wise and magnanimous conduct of Great Britain, in contributing to the success of your steady and temperate exertions, call for my congratulations, on the close of a session which must ever reflect the highest honour on the national character of both kingdoms.

“ It must be a most pleasing consideration to you, to recollect, that in the advances you made towards the settlement of your constitution, no acts of violence or impatience have marked their progress. A religious adherence to the laws confined your endeavours within the strictest bounds of loyalty and good order; your claims were directed by the same spirit that gave rise

and stability to the liberty of Great Britain, and could not fail of success, as soon as the councils of that kingdom were influenced by the avowed friends of the constitution.

“ Such a spirit of constitutional liberty communicating itself from one kingdom to the other, must naturally produce that reciprocal confidence and mutual affection, of which we already begin to feel the most salutary effects. A grateful zeal and generous ardour have united this whole kingdom in the most cordial and vigorous exertions, which promise effectually to frustrate the designs of our common enemy, and to re-establish and secure the glory of the whole empire.

“ Gentlemen of the house of commons—When I consider the very active and liberal part you have taken in contributing to these great and glorious events, I must as distinctly express to you his majesty’s sense of the last effusion of your generosity for the defence of the empire, as I must return you his most gracious thanks for the supplies which you so chearfully voted at the beginning of this session. His majesty’s royal example not only secures to you a most just and œconomical application of the aids you have granted him, but affords you a most solemn pledge of attentive investigation into every means which the circumstances of this country will afford to alleviate the burdens of his loyal and grateful people. To co-operate with you in carrying into effect this most benevolent disposition of his majesty, will afford me the highest gratification; and manifest to you the sentiments I shall

ever maintain, in return for the confidence you have reposed in the sincerity of my professions for your welfare.

“ My lords and gentlemen—In contemplating the services which your unremitting assiduity has rendered to the public, I must indulge myself in the satisfaction of specifying some very important acts, which will most materially strengthen the great constitutional reform you have compleated, and which will for ever distinguish the period of this memorable session. You have provided for the impartial and unbiassed administration of justice, by the act for securing the independency of judges. You have adopted one of the most effectual securities of British freedom, by limiting the mutiny-act in point of duration; you have secured that most invaluable of all human blessings, the personal liberty of the subject, by passing the Habeas Corpus act; you have cherished and enlarged the wise principles of toleration, and made considerable advances in abolishing those distinctions, which have too long impeded the progress of industry, and divided the nation. The diligence and ardour with which you have perserved in the accomplishment of these great objects, must ever bear the most honourable testimony of your zeal and industry in the service of your country, and manifest your knowledge of its true interests.

“ Many and great national objects must present themselves to your consideration during the recess from parliamentary business; but what I would most earnestly press upon you, as that on

which your domestic peace and happiness, and the prosperity of the empire at this moment most immediately depend, is to cultivate and diffuse those sentiments of affection and confidence which are now happily restored between the two kingdoms. Convince the people in your several districts, as you are yourselves convinced, that every cause of past jealousies and discontents is finally removed; that both countries have pledged their good faith to each other, and, that their BEST SECURITY will be, an INVIOABLE ADHERENCE TO THAT COMPACT; that the implicit reliance which Great Britain has reposed on the honour, generosity, and candour of Ireland, engages your national character to a return of sentiments equally liberal and enlarged: convince them, that the two kingdoms are now one, indissolubly connected in unity of constitution and unity of interests; that the danger and security, the prosperity and calamity of the one, must equally affect the other—that they stand or fall together.”

This was truly the revolution of Ireland, as Burke used to call it; not that of William, so long and so foolishly commemorated. No doubt, this memorable æra may be looked back to with pride, by an Irishman. It presents a magnificent frontispiece: a patriot parliament, a nation, a patriot volunteer army, corporations, grand juries, all with one accord, one voice, moderate but firm, calling upon proud, monopolizing England, for the restoration of Ireland's rights. What aspect could be more imposing, more

worthy of the majesty of a great and ancient people? To grace the triumphs of 1782, with an honorary institution, an order of chivalry was established, entitled, Knights of the illustrious order of St. Patrick. Alas! who could conceive, on those days of triumph and exultation, the deplorable catastrophe, that followed in a few years, when he might exclaim with the prophet, "How is the best of gold changed, yea, changed into dross!"

Hitherto, the progress of Ireland, in the acquisition of its rights, was commanding the respect of surrounding nations; and nothing more was wanting, to complete the triumph of the Volunteers, than a right use of the advantages already obtained. The revolution of 1782, was to be secured, by reforming the constitution in parliament; and, by giving the catholic population an interest in its conservation. But, unfortunately for the cause of Ireland, it was found more arduous to overcome bigotry, than the legislative supremacy, and commercial monopoly, of England. Through this unwise, unchristian disposition, parliamentary reform was lost, and eventually, all the glories of 1782. For, when the government found, that the armed convention at the Rotunda was divided on the question of catholic rights, they soon found means to disperse them.

The conduct of the Irish parliament, on that occasion, abundantly proves, that private, not public interest, obtained the consent of borough-mongers, to the demand for a free parliament.

For, in proportion as the power of the Irish parliament increased, the value of suffrages increased, and the price of boroughs. Had the Volunteers adopted the plan of buying off the boroughs, as Pitt did afterwards, the reform might, perhaps, have been carried, as the extinction of parliament was, at the expence of the poor Irish nation.

Though the efforts of the Volunteer army proved abortive in that particular, they deserve a place in history, like other memorable enterprises, that failed likewise; because history is the repository of human calamities, as well as success and prosperity. The Volunteer army of the north led the van in the public service. Without catholic emancipation, and parliamentary reform, all, that had been hitherto accomplished, rested on a tottering foundation, liable to be blown down by the first storm.

As Flood's arguments, on the question of retrenchment, in 1783, lay open some of the arts, by which the British ministry purloined away from the Irish, the benefit of late concessions, it may not prove unacceptable to the reader.

“ Notwithstanding the late hour, and the suffocation with which we are at present threatened in this house, and which will, I trust, in future be prevented by some contrivance to admit the fresh air without danger of cold, I cannot avoid offering to your consideration, a plan which will introduce a system of œconomy into the state, and thereby enable this country to avoid that abyss of poverty and wretchedness with which, through the mismanagement of the minister, and

corruption of his satellites, we are now threatened. A military reduction I now consider as affording the only solid ground for œconomy. To reduce the civil list, would be frivolous, pitiful, undeserving the name of œconomy, and therefore ought to bring contempt on such as would venture to rest solely there—not that I think the civil list ought to escape the pruning hand of this house, for every little will help; but so materially do our present expenditures exceed our income, that the whole civil list being struck off, would by no means equal them: to begin with it therefore is ridiculous; that this is the proper time for entering on this discussion no man can deny; if we wait till the committee of supply sit, we shall be told it is too late; so rapid and constant too has our extravagance been, that no time should be lost in interposing on behalf of our country. In the year 1775 you were not in debt, in the beginning of the late war you were not in debt; at the conclusion of the war you owed but £500,000, yet in the time of peace you quadruple that debt, notwithstanding the people and manufactures were burdened with new and excessive taxation. Your revenue has encreased, and your debts have kept pace with it; since the augmentation was voted, this has been regularly the course of things; let the virtue then of 1783 correct the abuses of 1762, the causes of which originated in the breach of the minister of the day—a man as subtle as he was crafty—a man, who wanting natural, substituted pecuniary influence—who, unconnected in this

country, had great connexions to oppose; thus situated, he at first carried his ideas so far, that he applied for an augmentation of 20,000 men, but this was so truly laughable, that it was scouted at; this unreasonable plan was reduced to 15,000 men; but, foreseeing that it would not be easy to carry even this point at one stroke, he artfully introduced a resolution, that 12,000 men were necessary for the defence of this country, knowing that we dare not meddle with the 3,500 which we had always paid for England; thus did we become dupes to his ambition, and were saddled with an army of officers, not privates—an army of expence, not of use—an army of the minister, not of the people.

“ I know arguments will be found, to prove that all this was expedient; and, that the great number of officers and regiments are necessary; but I will only ask, would the King of Prussia (and though I highly honour and respect the Rt. Hon. Gentleman who commands our army, it is no disgrace to set him the example of the King of Prussia) act so? No—I say, the King of Prussia, who is on all hands allowed to understand military matters as well as any individual now alive, differs widely from us in the regulation of his army: in it, the proportion of privates to officers is not as ours is, nearly double to what it is in our army; no—we know, that he has not one-fourth our number of officers, in proportion to his troops. Some regulation to this effect might also afford ground for considerable retrenchment, and for one such regulation

it should meet my support, merely in compliment to the opinion of that great man; and his opinion we may easily collect from his practice. Now if the present distressed state of our finances be traced to this source; if a faulty military establishment, encreased by a more faulty augmentation, be the cause of our enormous debt, the time of peace is surely the proper time to apply a remedy; but that this business may not depend merely upon what I say, I have it in my power to apply to the records of the house for corroborating testimony. In the year 1768, there was a committee (of the greatest consequence, if we consider the men who composed it) to take this question into consideration; I shall call for their report, in which you will see the greatest abuses exposed; you will see that our expences outran our revenues £150,000 per annum before the augmentation, and that since that time we have increased in extravagance £100,000 more per annum, making each session £500,000 increase of our debt; as, therefore, it is in this department our great expence lies, it is by retrenching this we can hope effectually to serve the nation, to prevent her from bankruptcy, and save her from ruin; and is there any man who will say this ought not to be done, or that it is not a consummation devoutly to be wished?

“ In the civil list we may indeed make some trifling retrenchments, but nothing that can essentially relieve the nation. Is there any man who will say, that 12,000 men may not be maintained as heretofore? No, nor will any man say that

what we could save by œconomy and retrenchment, should be thrown away upon a military establishment, when it might be applied to other measures infinitely more beneficial to the nation."

This attempt to retrench the expences of government was rejected. Grattan spoke and voted with government on that occasion. A motion for protecting Irish manufacturers, by duties on goods imported into England, was in like manner lost; and the public again took up their cause, by entering into a non-importation agreement.

A second meeting was held at Dungannon, by 500 delegates from 248 corps of Volunteers, September 8, 1783, to consider the important question of parliamentary reform; rightly judging, that it would avail little, to have freed parliament from the legislative supremacy of Britain, unless they could deliver it from the dominion of corruption. Colonel James Stewart having taken the chair, the following resolutions were entered into.

1. That freedom is the indefeasible right of Irishmen and of Britons, derived from the Author of their being, and of which no power on earth, much less a delegated power, hath a right to deprive them.

2. That they only are free, who are governed by no laws but those to which they assent, either by themselves in person, or by their representatives freely chosen, subject to the controul, and frequently returning into the common mass of constituents.

3. That the majority of our house of commons is not chosen by the people, but returned by the mandate of peers or commoners, either for indigent boroughs where scarce any inhabitants exist, or considerable cities or towns, where the elective franchise is vested in a few, who are thus suffered to place the highest trusts of society, against the interest and will of the many, in the hands of men who seldom act as if they considered themselves accountable for their conduct to the people.

4. That by the ancient constitution of our parliament, elections for representatives were for centuries annual, and in many instances more frequent, and the exercise of suffrage among freemen more universal.

5. That every approach to those fundamental principles tends to a renovation of, not an innovation in the constitution.

6. That the elective franchise ought of right to extend to all those, and those only, who are likely to exercise it for the public good.

7. That the present inadequate representation, and the long duration of parliaments, destroy that balance which, by our constitution, should subsist between the three estates of the legislature, render the commons' house independent of the people, procure certain majorities in favour of every administration, and threaten either an absolute monarchy, or, that still more odious government, an aristocracy.

8. That therefore the present imperfect representation, and the long duration of parliaments, are unconstitutional, and intolerable grievances.

9. That as the voice of the commons of Ireland is no less necessary for every legislative purpose, that that of either the king or lords, the people have a just and inherent right to correct the abuses of representation, whenever such abuses shall have so increased, as to rob them of their constitutional share in their own government.

10. That it is the interest of parliament itself, to effect a substantial reform, as the very existence of that assembly must become precarious, when it shall lose the confidence of the people, to whom it originally owed its creation, and from whom alone its powers are derived.

11. That we solemnly pledge ourselves to each other, and to our country, to seek a speedy and effectual redress of our grievances, and to co-operate with our fellow-subjects in every exertion necessary to obtain it. We call for the aid of every upright senator; of every man, whether in Ireland or Great Britain, who bears, or wishes to acquire, the title of a Freeman.

12. That we have attended with admiration, to the noble, though hitherto ineffectual efforts, of those illustrious characters, and virtuous citizens, who in England and Scotland strenuously labour to procure redress of similar grievances. May the examples of the sister nations mutually animate the inhabitants of each, to persevere with unremitting ardour, until the glorious labour be finally completed!

13. That a committee (of five persons from each county) be now chosen (by ballot) to represent this province in a grand national conven-

tion, to be held at noon in the Royal Exchange at Dublin, on the 10th day of November next, to which we trust each of the other provinces will send delegates, to digest and publish a plan of parliamentary reform, to pursue such measures as may appear to them most likely to render it effectual, to adjourn from time to time, and convene provincial meetings if found necessary.

Resolved unanimously, that it be an instruction to said committee, that the delegates from each county do prepare, and carry with them to the national convention, an account of all the cities, towns, and boroughs in this province: the mode of election at present in such as return members to parliament: as near as may be, the proportionate number of protestant and Roman catholic inhabitants in each; and a conjecture of their comparative properties.

That we are decided in opinion that the representatives of the people ought not in future to consent to any bill of supply for a longer term than six months, until a complete redress of the aforesaid grievances be obtained.

They further invite the Volunteers of the other three provinces, to join in the glorious undertaking, whose success would crown all their labours, and give stability and permanence to the benefits already conferred on their country.

“ To the Volunteer Armies of the provinces of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught. Fellow subjects, the transcendant events, which our united efforts have produced, present an eminent instance of the protecting hand of Heaven; whilst

the progressive virtue, and the general union of the people, naturally prompt them to revive the spirit of an unrivalled constitution, and to vindicate the inherent rights of men.

“ The most important work yet remains; which neglected, our past attainments are transitory, unsubstantial, insecure! an extension to thousands of our fellow-citizens of a franchise, comprehending the very essence of liberty, and drawing the line which precisely separates the freeman from the slave.

“ Suffer us, therefore, to conjure you, by every endearing tie that connects man with man, with unceasing zeal to pursue one of the most glorious objects that ever agitated the human mind; a restoration of virtue to a senate long unaccustomed to speak the voice of the people; a restitution of the ancient balance of our government; and a firm establishment of the first rights of nature, on the ruins of an avowed corruption, at once the bane of morals, and of liberty.

“ From a grand national convention, distinguished by integrity, and inspired with the courageous spirit of the constitution, every blessing must result. With one voice, then, the voice of united millions, let Ireland assert her claim to freedom.

“ Through her four principal assemblies let her temperate declarations flow to one common centre; and there matured into an extensive plan of reform, be produced as the solemn act of the volunteer army of Ireland: as a demand of rights, robbed of which, the unanimated forms of a free

government would be a curse, and existence itself cease to be a blessing.

“ Friends and countrymen ! The eyes of an enlightened world are this instant upon us ; Munster has in part already led the way ; and millions of our fellow-subjects in Britain, in whom the flame of liberty still burns with lustre, behold with delight our exertions in the common cause, and in our success see the harbinger of their own !

“ Let the reflection, that Greece, the seat of liberty and of science, that Rome, the mistress of the world, now lie prostrate by the hand of tyranny, teach Ireland wisdom. To our deliberative assemblies they convey awful warning to be spirited, unanimous, and firm ; lest the present wretched condition of other countries be soon the fate of our own.

“ May the Supreme Ruler of the Universe crown his other blessings by being present with us, by promoting union and the love of our country among all ranks of men, and by finally directing our exertions to virtue, liberty, and peace !”

The mode, thus proposed, was adopted. The delegates met, appointed the Earl of Charlemont chairman, entered into resolutions expressive of their sentiments, and requested Henry Flood, Esq. to introduce a bill for the reform of parliament into the house of commons.

Mr. Flood moved for leave to bring in the bill, which was rejected by a great majority. The corrupt body stickled for corruption, obsti-

nately opposing every attempt to purify the Augean stable. The people still persevered; and, as the principal objection to Flood's bill was, that it originated from an armed body, the sheriffs and chief magistrates were now called upon, to convene the inhabitants of their respective counties to discuss this important measure. For this purpose, a meeting was convened by the high-sheriffs of the city of Dublin, on the 7th of June, 1784, at which the high-sheriffs presided, and the following resolutions entered into.

Resolved unanimously, that the present imperfect representation, and the long duration of parliaments, are unconstitutional, and intolerable grievances.

That the voice of the Commons of Ireland is no less necessary for every legislative purpose, than that of either the Sovereign or the Lords; and, therefore, the people claim it as their just, inherent, and unalienable privilege, to correct abuses in the representation, whenever such abuses shall have so increased as to deprive them of their constitutional share in their own government.

That the people of Ireland have, and always had, a clear, unalienable, indefeasible right to a frequency of election, as well as to an adequate and equal representation, founded upon stronger grounds than that of any act or acts of parliament; and, that the attainment of those constitutional important objects, is the most effectual expedient for restoring and securing the independence of parliament.

“That the present inadequate representation, and the long duration of parliaments, destroy that balance which by our constitution should subsist between the three estates of the legislature, render the members of the house of commons independent of the people, procure determined majorities in favour of every administration, and threaten either an absolute monarchy, or that still more odious government, a tyrannical aristocracy.

That the majority of the house of commons is not chosen by the people, but returned by the mandates of peers of the realm and others, either for indigent boroughs, where scarce any inhabitants reside, or for considerable cities and towns, where the elective power is vested in a few.

That the venality and corruption of the present house of commons, evinced by the many arbitrary acts passed in the last session, and the contempt and indignity with which they treated the applications and petitions of the constituent body, oblige us now to request the people at large to unite with us in the attainment of a more adequate representation, and in petitions to the throne for a dissolution of the present parliament.

That the strength of a nation consists in the union of its inhabitants.

Resolved (with one dissenting voice,) That a participation in general rights must ever engage mankind to operate most effectually for each other.

Resolved therefore (with one dissenting voice),

That to extend the right of suffrage to our Roman catholic brethren, still preserving in its fullest extent the present protestant government of this country, would be a measure fraught with the happiest consequences, and would be highly conducive to civil liberty.

Resolved unanimously, That a committee of 21 gentlemen be now appointed to prepare an address to the people, requesting their co-operation with us; and also, a petition to his majesty, stating our grievances, and praying a dissolution of the present corrupt parliament, in whom we cannot place any trust or confidence, and that they report the same to this body on Monday the 21st June inst.

At a future meeting, the committee having made their report, the following Address to the people of Ireland was agreed to and published.

Friends and Countrymen, Permit us, the inhabitants of the city of Dublin, with all the affection due to fellow-subjects, and that anxiety, which every citizen must feel for his native country, to address you on the most important subject that ever engrossed the attention of a free people.

Long and painfully have we endured, in common with you all, the miseries arising from the abuse of power, and the well-known defects in the present state of representation in the Commons House of Parliament—defects, tending to the total annihilation of our boasted form of government, and productive of the highest oppression to the inhabitants of this loyal and independent nation.

It is with reluctance we find ourselves compelled to enter into a detail of grievances, which being felt by all, cannot be unknown to any.— But whilst we consider it prudent to justify our proceedings to the world, we must intreat your indulgence, if we state particulars which might otherwise be thought unnecessary.

Perfectly sensible must you be, of that aristocratic influence, which has rendered the representation of the people merely nominal, and destroyed that equal balance in the three estates of the legislature, on which alone depends the existence of our glorious constitution. You have beheld the charters granted to divers boroughs in this kingdom, intitling the bodies thereby incorporated to a return of representatives, abused and perverted to the most destructive purposes: insomuch, that the intention of the Crown, in establishing these borough towns, has been frustrated by the artful practices of designing men: and persons returned to parliament from depopulated places, where scarce any inhabitants exist, or for considerable cities and towns, where the elective franchise is confined to a few. Nor is it less notorious that the proprietors of the soil, where such depopulated boroughs once stood, have dared to usurp a power of selling seats to members in the present house of commons, and, by such unwarrantable and corrupt means, have those purchasers become illegal representatives of the people.

Convinced by dear-bought experience of the many evils from hence arising, we have joined in

every measure to obtain redress, which has hitherto been pointed out to us by the complaining voice of an injured and insulted kingdom—but unhappily we have as yet found every attempt ineffectual to restore the constitution to its pure and primitive principles.

In vain did the noble assertors of liberty, composing the volunteer army of Ireland—(arrayed and embodied at their own expence, the unexampled protectors of their country against foreign foes and domestic usurpation,) adjust by their delegates, agreeable to the desire of this nation, a more equal representation, solemnly and deliberately agreed upon. In vain did the united voice of the electors of this kingdom, through every free county, city, and borough, declare itself in favour of such plan of reform, and instruct their several representatives to support the same. In vain was an attempt made by the real friends of their country to introduce such plan into parliament, and obtain it the sanction of a law. The baneful influence of corruption and venality prevented any success; and with equal folly and audacity, were the justifiable demands of the people treated with ignominy and contempt.

Had the persons thus obtruded into the parliament of this kingdom, considered it with a due degree of justice and moderation, possibly the legality of their title to a share in its legislature might have remained unexamined, or at least, uncontroverted. But when usurpation is followed by injury and insult, that nation must be com-

posed of slaves indeed, which can tamely submit, without any exertion in its defence.

But the policy of our oppressors lost sight of this principle; and, not content with the exercise of an authority unconstitutionally derived, they have extended it to the entire destruction of our most valuable rights, and our civil and commercial interests.

Hence it is, that during the last session of parliament, the most wanton and reiterated acts of oppression have been multiplied—personal liberty has been rendered insecure—protecting duties (adopted by every wise nation) refused—our chartered rights infringed—the subject unconstitutionally and illegally imprisoned—the trial by jury, in many instances, suspended—the freedom of the press (that grand palladium of our liberties) violated—an infamous power given to expose and restrain private correspondence—a large standing army kept up in the time of profound peace—that badge of slavery, the stamp-act, so disgracefully altered, as to make it a still greater grievance—and taxation unnecessarily augmented, to the general ruin of the nation.—Such are the proceedings of a parliament in which the members of the house of commons do not really represent the people, but have become the representation of an overgrown and overbearing aristocracy, raised upon the ruins of our rights and privileges; whereby the original purpose of the democratic branch of the legislature is defeated, the constitution effectually destroyed, and instead of being a shield against unnecessary

taxation, the commons are rendered the hired instrument to pillage an already impoverished and distressed people.

Thus, fellow-subjects and countrymen, is all confidence in parliament, and the dignity thereof, destroyed—the trust of representation betrayed—the instructions of the constituent body of the people disobeyed—commercial interests neglected—and, emigration consequently promoted, to the great discouragement of population, and the diminution of the national wealth; and thus doth experience evince, that a house of commons, under the undue influence of either of the two other branches of the legislature, is ever ready to betray the most sacred rights of the people; and we find, that parliaments chosen as they now are, and continuing for eight years, as they now do, will ever be composed, for the most part, of persons under the guidance of particular noblemen and others, solely aiming at, and perpetually contending for, the power and emoluments of office.

Enjoying the advantages lately held out to us by our sister kingdom, who, with equal justice and magnanimity, unequivocally acknowledged and restored to us our right of exclusive legislature, and to maintain a strict amity with whom, is not less our inclination than our interest, we have to regret that internal situation of our own country, that corruption and venality which pervades our senate, and those defects already pointed out in our legislature, which prevent our pursuing means, that, under the free enjoy-

ment of our constitution, and with the prudent direction of virtuous rulers, might render us a prosperous, happy, and united kingdom.

Failing in every other mode of redress, we have been now induced to approach the throne, by an humble petition, praying the dissolution of the present parliament, and seeking that relief from our most gracious Sovereign, which has been indignantly refused by those who assume to be the delegated servants of the people. Nor do we doubt of success, if, meeting with the approbation of our fellow-subjects (which can alone render effectual this salutary and necessary measure) we shall be supported by their warm and zealous co-operation, in bringing those national grievances to the ear of majesty.

Convinced of the necessity, we cannot, however, presume to point out any specific mode for a parliamentary reform in the representation of the people: that, in which all are equally concerned, must receive from all their approbation and support. We call upon you, therefore, and thus conjure you, that, in this important work, you join with us, as fellow-subjects, countrymen, and friends, as men embarked in the general cause, to remove a general calamity; and for this we propose, that five persons be elected from each county, city, and great town in this kingdom, to meet in national congress, at some convenient place in this city, on Monday, the 25th day of October next, there to deliberate, digest and determine on such measures, as may seem to them most conducive to re-establish the consti-

tution on a pure and permanent basis, and secure to the inhabitants of this kingdom peace, liberty and safety.

And whilst we thus contend, as far as in us lies, for our constitutional rights and privileges, we recommend to your consideration, the state of our suffering fellow-subjects, the Roman Catholics of this kingdom, whose emancipation from the restraints under which they still labour, we consider not only as equitable, but essentially conducive to the general union and prosperity of the kingdom.

Trusting with the most perfect confidence in your concurrence and support, we entertain the strongest hopes of freeing our country from that yoke of bondage, which domestic enemies have thus imposed on it. The majesty of the people will then re-assume its proper influence in the guidance of the state; and Divine Providence, knowing the justice of our cause, will graciously assist us in obtaining those rights, to which we are entitled by the laws of God and nature.

A. Kirkpatrick, jun. B. Smith, Sheriffs.

The following petition to his majesty was also agreed to.

To the King's most excellent majesty. The humble petition of the freemen, freeholders, and inhabitants of the city of Dublin. Most gracious Sovereign, permit us, your loyal and dutiful subjects, with every sentiment of duty and attachment to your majesty's person, family, and government, to approach the throne with the greatest respect and humility, to lay a national

grievance of the highest importance to your crown and dignity, and to the liberties and properties of your people of Ireland, at your majesty's feet.

The grievance your distressed subjects thus humbly presume to lay before your majesty, is the present illegal and inadequate representation of the people of this kingdom in parliament, illegal, because the returns of members for boroughs are not agreeable to the charters granted for that purpose by the crown; and inadequate, because there are as many members returned for each of these boroughs, by a few voters, as are returned for any county or city in this kingdom.

Born in a country, where your petitioners, from their earliest infancy, were taught to believe the laws for their government passed through a house of commons elected by the people, they conceived their liberties founded on the most firm basis; but finding laws passed, inimical as well to your Majesty's crown as their rights, (which are inseparable,) they were led into a minute inquiry of the cause, and discovering the same to proceed from the present insufficient mode of representation, and the long duration of parliament, which render even the few members, who are constitutionally elected, nearly independent of their constituents, they now most humbly beg leave to inform your Majesty, that men thus elected cease to have any weight with your people.

It is to the grand cause of aristocratic influence, (jealous, as all inordinate power must

be, of whatever may tend to shake its establishment,) and to the misrepresentations which have been transmitted to your Majesty, of your faithful subjects of Ireland, that we attribute many arbitrary and alarming proceedings in the last session of our parliament.

A bill for the more equal representation of the people (the desire of millions of your faithful subjects,) has been refused even a discussion in our parliament.

Protection has been denied to our infant trade and manufactures, which England thinks necessary to the maturity and vigour of hers.

A violent attack has been made on the liberty of the press, that supplement to the laws, and palladium of liberty; a terror only to tyrants and apostates.

Alarming restrictions on the commercial and friendly communications of your Majesty's subjects, have been imposed by the post-office act.

A general system of prodigality seems to have been adopted for the purpose of burdening our trade, and damping all spirit of industry; and emigrations consequently encouraged, and now increasing to an alarming degree.

A manifest infringement has been made on the ancient and sacred charters of the capital of this realm; and instead of the constitutional trial by jury, a novel tribunal instituted, from whose sentence there lies no appeal.

It is with infinite concern we are obliged to add, that your Majesty's ministers in this kingdom have assisted in all the measures of which

we thus humbly complain; a circumstance the more extraordinary, as your Majesty has lately thought it necessary to appeal to the British electors at large, against the power of an aristocracy; and, as your Majesty's first minister in England has virtuously declared himself friendly to the principal measure which has been here rejected, we mean a more equal representation of the people, convinced that an overbearing aristocracy is not less hostile to the liberties of the subject than to the prerogative of the crown.

We further entreat your majesty's permission, to condemn that remnant of the penal code of laws, which still oppresses our Roman catholic fellow-subjects; laws, which tend to prohibit education and liberality, restrain certain privileges, and to proscribe industry, love of liberty, and patriotism.

Deeply affected by these national calamities, we, your majesty's faithful and loyal subjects, the citizens of Dublin, do therefore most humbly beg leave to supplicate your majesty, that you will be graciously pleased to exercise your royal inclination to adopt with decision and effect, whatever your majesty should collect to be the sense of the people.

That your majesty may enjoy every felicity through a long and glorious reign, over loyal and happy subjects, and that your descendants may inherit your several dominions till time shall be no more, is, and always will be, our sincere and fervent prayer. Signed by order, Alexander Kirkpatrick, Benjamin Smith.

The high sheriffs presented this petition to the Duke of Rutland, lord lieutenant, with an address requesting its transmittal. To which his excellency answered.

“ Gentlemen, at the same time that I comply with your request, in transmitting to his majesty a paper signed by you, entitled a petition of the freemen, freeholders, and inhabitants of the city of Dublin, I shall not fail to convey my entire disapprobation of it, as casting unjust reflections upon the laws and parliament of Ireland, and tending to weaken the authority of both.”

These proceedings, though seconded by other parts of the kingdom, the interposition of government frustrated. Prosecutions were commenced against those who convened the aggregate meetings. Henry Steevens Reilly, Esq. high sheriff of the county of Dublin, was sentenced to fine and imprisonment, by the court of King's-bench. After a few days confinement, on acknowledging his error, and making a public apology in that court, he was liberated, and the fine reduced.

The attentive observer will readily perceive, for what reason parliamentary reform met that desperate resistance, which ultimately defeated all the endeavours of the patriots. A free trade, and free parliament, after a serious struggle, was conceded, with reluctance. Yet, as long as the parliament remained a corruptible body, there was a fair prospect of recovering these concessions, with compound interest. Moreover, parliamentary reform taking place in Ireland, it would be no easy task for a British minister, to

resist the demands of England, for a similar reform in their own parliament; or preserve the darling instrument of power, commonly called influence.

The lord lieutenant's speech to the parliament, that met in 1785, at once soothing and insidious, is an evidence of this. After professing the utmost zeal for the prosperity of Ireland, and flattering the pride and prejudices of the commons, he notices unconstitutional proceedings, i. e. meetings, convened by the sheriffs, to consider of the propriety of petitioning for parliamentary reform.

“ My lords and gentlemen, I have his majesty's commands to meet you in parliament, and to desire your advice and co-operation, upon those affairs of importance, which, in the present circumstances of the kingdom, require your most serious attention.

“ Whilst I lament the lawless outrages and unconstitutional proceedings which had taken place since your last prorogation, I had the satisfaction to perceive that these excesses were confined to a few places, and even in these condemned: and I have now the pleasure to observe, that by the salutary interposition of the laws, the general tranquillity is re-established....

“ I am to recommend in the king's name, to your earnest investigation those objects of trade and commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, which have not yet received their complete adjustment. In forming a plan, with a view to a final settlement, you will be sensible that the in-

terest of Great Britain and Ireland ought to be for ever united and inseparable; and his majesty relies on your liberality and your wisdom for adopting such an equitable system, for the joint benefit of both countries, and the support of the common interest, as will secure mutual satisfaction and permanency.

“ The encouragement and extension of agriculture and manufactures, and especially of the linen manufacture, will, I am persuaded, engage your constant concern. Let me likewise direct your attention, in a particular manner, to the fisheries on your coasts, from which you may reasonably hope for an improving source of industry and wealth to this kingdom, and of strength to the empire.”...

“ It is the province of your prudence and discretion to consider what new provisions may be necessary for securing the subjects from violence and outrage, for the regulation of the police, and the better execution of the laws, as well as for the general encouragement of peaceable subordination and honest industry. It will be a pleasing task to me to assist and promote your exertions for the tranquillity of the kingdom, for upholding the authority of the legislature, and supporting the true principles of our happy constitution, both in church and state.”

On the 18th of February, the grand committee for the courts of justice, was ordered to sit on the next Thursday, to which was referred the charge, and the order for attachment, against H. S. Reilly, Esq. late high sheriff of the county of Dublin.

On the 24th, this subject was introduced by Mr. Flood; but, overpowered by a great majority, he soon after resumed it, and moved that the commons should resolve, "that the practice of attachments, for contempt of court, stands on the same ground of law in both kingdoms, and ought not to be extended further in Ireland than in England."

The propriety of this resolution he eloquently enforced. "I moved yesterday," said he, "that the officer of the court of king's bench should attend on this day, with the rule book of the court, on the crown side, for the years 1761, 1762, and 1763. I conceived that it contained most useful and necessary information. I will not say, that for that reason it was denied; but it was denied. I moved that the grand committee of courts of justice should sit this day, to receive the subject: that too was refused; though certainly the most parliamentary mode of proceeding. I shall, however, go on; for every thing that passed in that committee the night before the last, makes it more necessary to enter into the present discussion.

"I do not mean to arraign the king's bench, much less the committee of this house; but there are moments, and there are cases wherein a prejudice seizes on the minds of great and wise bodies, and induces them to decide in a manner less suited to their wisdom and to their greatness, than one would have expected. The derided aggregate meeting; the dreaded reform of parliament; the inhabitants as well as freeholders,

being invited by Mr. Sheriff Reilly's notice; the question of catholic franchise; the words representation and congress strangely tortured; and the reprobated resolution of that meeting, pledging their lives and fortunes to the unknown and unformed decision of that congress, and of those representatives; all these circumstances, heightened by eloquence and prejudice, seem originally to have run away with the discretion of the king's bench, and to have had the same effect on the committee of this house, the night before the last.... It becomes necessary, therefore, to bring before you now, the constitutional question, as to the principle of attachment, without reference to any particular court of justice, or to any particular and specific case.

“ The very power of parliament has been questioned, as if we would be competent to enquire into his judgments, which ought to be our ground for doing either; or as if we could be competent to make laws, and yet have no knowledge or judgment as to the laws that are in being. But the constitution and the law say otherwise.

“ A short view of the Norman æra, will shew that the present doctrine of attachment, has no foundation but in the star-chamber. William the Conqueror overturned the whole constitution; by an arbitrary fiction, he assumed to be the proprietor of the whole soil, and divided it into 60,000 knights-fees, that he might have, in effect, an army of 60,000 knights bound to him by all the chains of the tyrannous Norman feud,

which he introduced. As to national assemblies, such as the Saxon, he held none; as to parliaments, such as we know, he held none. If he held any public councils, they were councils of barons only, and those partially and arbitrarily summoned, a fault in which he was imitated by most of his immediate successors.

“As to the judicial power, which is our object, he cancelled, in effect, the Saxon constitution, and the county courts, and substituted a Norman court, called the *Aula Regis*, in the place of them, and compelled the people to quit their native judicature, and their native language, and to plead in the Norman language, and in this Norman judicature, before an ecclesiastic, whom he brought from Normandy to preside in that court, in the character, and with the title, of *Capitalis justiciarius*; and here the enemies of liberty take their stand.

“They point to the ruins of the constitution, and from them they pretend to delineate its fabric, and to establish its principles on its subversion. But the right honourable member [the Attorney General] might as well tell me, that the curfew, or that the Conquest was a part of the constitution, as that the *Aula Regis* was so.

“This court, and this justiciary, established by a tyrant to support his tyranny, soon became a tyrant, in the reigns of his successors, both to the prince and to the people, and rose to such enormity in the reign of Henry III. when Bracton wrote, whom the right honourable gentleman [the Attorney General] has quoted, that the son

of that Henry III. namely Edward I. overthrew that court, and established on its ruins, the four great courts of judicature which we now possess, and has been thence justly styled, the Justinian of England.

“ The tumultuary reigns, that were infested by the wars of York and Lancaster, are not times of precedent; if in that period any had been produced, which yet there have not. What follows? We are brought to the reign of Henry VII. and then a statute was found necessary to support the court of star-chamber. And why? Because the practices of that court could not be supported by the common law of the land. Attachments, in full extent, then began indeed. But they began in the star-chamber, and under that statute. By example, it is true, they crept into other courts; which are apt enough to favour increase of jurisdiction; but as they rose (in their culpable extent) with that statute, which was made to support the star-chamber, so also, they must be considered, as falling with that statute. What follows? That attachment is not a part of the general law of the land, but merely a law of privilege for the protection of the courts; founded on, and tolerated only by necessity, and not to be endured beyond it. It can, therefore, only extend to persons guilty of contempt to the courts, in their presence; to the officers and servants of the court; to persons abusing or resisting the process of the court; and to the sheriffs or magistrates, when they become, in effect, servants of the court *pro tempore*; by being pro

tempore actually, not constructively engaged in the service of the court.

“ Now to apply this to the case of any of those sheriffs, who have favoured county meetings for promoting a reform, except Mr. Reilly, whose case I will keep entirely out of the present question, has any sheriff a power or authority by his office, to command such meetings? Certainly not. Has any sheriff pretended to command such meetings? Certainly not. Have they summoned the county by their bailiffs? No. Have they attempted to punish any man for absence? No. Did they compel the power of the county, that is, the county armed, to assemble? No. On the face of their advertisement, was it not declared, that the meeting was desired, not commanded, at the request of others, and not by the official power of the sheriff? Certain gentlemen of the county desire the presence of the sheriff, as the first conservator of the peace. Is not this an overt act of peace, not of sedition? They desire the convenience of his county court, probably the longest and the most central room in the county; and by his notice he signifies a compliance with their desires. What is there in this, that can be tortured into a crime? Are voluntary meetings, in a free country, *prima facie*, and in themselves illegal? Certainly not. Is deliberating on a reform illegal? Certainly not. But choosing delegates to represent them in congress, it is said, is illegal. In the first place, these expressions were used in very few counties; but even where they were, I ask, is the word “ con-

gress" to become for ever, and in all senses, illegal, because the Americans used it? As to America, it has now the sanction of parliamentary authority. By definition, it is only a meeting or assembly; and, in its general use, has been more frequently employed to denote meetings for promoting peace than war. I have no partiality for the word congress; because, in my mind, Ireland is as good an authority herself, as any she can find abroad. But yet I cannot find, that there is any illegality in those syllables, or in that sound. As to representatives, I readily admit, that if by representatives it were necessary to understand, that they were persons, whose deliberations were to bind the people, and to have any coercive authority or legal obligation, the objection would be just. This House, undoubtedly, is the only representatives of the people in parliament; that is to say, to all purposes of legislation. I proposed a resolution to that effect, in lord Carlisle's government, but the parliament would not assent to it. Yet now there are, who say, that this House is not only the sole representative of the people in parliament, and for legislation, but that we can have no other kind of representation whatever, for any other purpose, or in any other capacity. Now the latter I deny. The king is the representative of the community, as to foreign states. Every man may have various representatives. A man's heir is his representative in one sense; his executor in another, his agent in a third, his attorney in a fourth, any man to whom he gives a letter of attorney

for a particular purpose, in a fifth, and so on, ad infinitum. That the people have a right to petition, no man denies. But they cannot depute or delegate that right, it is argued. It is unnecessary to debate that point, for neither the convention nor congress have petitioned, or mean to petition. What then is the fact? Each county has chosen a few nominees, or deputies, in whom they confide, to confer with others of the same description from other counties, in the capital, as the place most convenient for meeting, and for information; and during the sitting of parliament, when it is possible to be of use, not during its prorogation, when it could be of no use; and this they have done, for what? That concord may be the better obtained, in a case where any division among the people would be fatal. What these deputies or delegates resolve, has no binding force, or coercive obligatoriness, on the counties. The counties may petition in support of those resolves, or they may not; they may enforce them by all their constitutional powers, or they may reject them. In short, it only tends to unite the people, and hence is the objection to it. The enemies to reform wish to divide the people. They feel, that this mode is the best mode of uniting them. They know, that that union would be irresistible, and they therefore object to this measure, not because it is really illegal, but because it is rational and efficacious."

Mr. Flood's resolution, seconded by Sir Edward Newenham, was lost, and the intention frustrated; the House resolving, " That the

practice of attachments for contempts of court, stands upon the same ground of law both in England and Ireland and does not appear to have been extended in this kingdom beyond the same."

The next great object of discussion, in the session of 1785, though in comparison of parliamentary reform, a trifle, merits, nevertheless, some notice. The parti-coloured parliament, after having resisted the wishes of the nation, and rejected reform, thought proper, in order to allay public discontents, to bring forward something in favour of Ireland. They, in consequence, entered into a treaty of commerce with England, to adjust the terms of commercial intercourse on a basis reciprocally beneficial to both.

Though Mr. Pitt supported the cause of Irish commerce, with an appearance of warmth and zeal, and great force of argument, one would be apt, from the known duplicity of the man, to suspect, that he secretly roused the commercial jealousy of England. All the commercial towns in England blazed with jealous hatred against Irish commerce. Meetings were held, the table of the British commons was loaded with petitions, petitioners and lawyers attended at the bar, against the odious and terrible propositions of the Irish parliament, against the most distant idea of granting to the wild Irish, the benefits of their own industry, and of the bounties of heaven. There never was so much national animosity, chicanery and malignity displayed, on occasion of any commercial treaty, with a hostile power, as burst forth, on

that occasion, least Paddy should be allowed, without loss to the Bull family, to acquire the comforts of life. Nothing could set, in a clearer point of view, the gross ignorance, and narrow conceptions, of that family. Parliamentary reform they favoured; which obtained, would be every thing for Ireland. They rose furiously against commercial regulations, comparatively insignificant. Hence, the crafty minister took advantage, to make such alterations, as materially changed the object; and, under colour of commercial advantages, sought to purloin the rights lately obtained, by deceitful speeches.

How moderate the proposals, sent by the Irish parliament, were, the reader will judge, from their eleven propositions, as recapitulated by secretary Orde.

“ That it is the opinion of this committee, that it is highly important to the general interest of the British empire, that the trade between Great Britain and Ireland be encouraged and extended as much as possible; and for that purpose that the intercourse and commerce be finally settled and regulated on permanent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of both countries.

“ That towards carrying into full effect so desirable a settlement, it is fit and proper that all articles, not the growth or manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland, should be imported into each kingdom from the other reciprocally, under the same regulations, and at the same duties, if subject to duties, to which they are

liable when imported directly from the place of their growth, produce, or manufacture; and that all duties originally paid on importation into either countries respectively, shall be fully drawn back on exportation to the other.

“ That for the same purpose it is proper that no prohibition should exist in either country against the importation, use, or sale of any article the growth, product, or manufacture of the other; and that the duty on the importation of every such article, if subject to duty in either country, should be precisely the same in the one country as in the other, except where an addition may be necessary in either country, in consequence of an internal duty on any such article of its own consumption.

“ That in all cases where the duties on articles of the growth, product, or manufacture of either country are different on the importation into the other, it would be expedient that they should be reduced in the kingdom where they are the highest, to the amount payable in the other; and that all such articles should be exportable from the kingdom into which they shall be imported, as free from duty as the similar commodities or home manufacture of the same kingdom.

“ That for the same purpose, it is also proper, that, in all cases where either kingdom shall charge articles of its own consumption with an internal duty on the manufacture, or a duty on the material, the same manufacture, when imported from the other, may be charged with a

farther duty on importation to the same amount, adequate to countervail the duty on the material, and shall be entitled to such drawbacks or bounties on exportation, as may leave the same subject to no heavier burden than the home-made manufacture; such farther duty to continue so long only as the internal consumption shall be charged with the duty or duties to balance which it shall be imposed, or until the manufacture coming from the other kingdom, shall be subjected there to an equal burden, not drawn back, or compensated on exportation.

“ That in order to give permanency to the settlement now intended to be established, it is necessary that no prohibition, or new or additional duties should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom on the importation of any article of the growth, product, or manufacture of the other, except such additional duties as may be requisite to balance duties on internal consumption, pursuant to the foregoing resolution.

“ That for the same purpose it is necessary farther that no prohibitions, or new or additional duties, should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom on the exportation of any article of native growth, product, or manufacture, from thence to the other, except such as either kingdom may deem expedient, from time to time, upon corn, meal, flour, and biscuits; and also except where there now exists any prohibition, which is not reciprocal, or any duty which is not equal in both kingdoms; in every such case the prohibition may be made reciprocal,

or the duties raised, so as to make them equal.

“ That for the same purpose, it is necessary that no bounties whatsoever should be paid, or payable in either kingdom, on the exportation of any article to the other, except such as relate to corn, meal, flour, and biscuits, and such as are in the nature of drawbacks, or compensation for duties paid; and that no bounty should be granted in this kingdom on the exportation of any article imported from the British plantations, or any manufacture made of such article, unless in case where a similar bounty is payable in Britain on exportation from thence, or where such bounty is merely in the nature of a drawback, or compensation of, for duties paid, over and above any duty paid thereon in Britain.

“ That it is expedient for the general benefit of the British empire, that the importation of articles from foreign states should be regulated from time to time in each kingdom, on such terms as may afford an effectual preference to the importation of similar articles of the growth, produce, or manufactures of the other.

“ That it is essential to the commercial interests of this country to prevent, as much as possible, an accumulation of national debt; and that therefore it is highly expedient that the annual revenues of this kingdom should be made equal to its annual expences.

“ That for the better protection of trade, whatever sum the gross hereditary revenue of this kingdom (after deducting all drawbacks, re-payments, or bounties granted in the nature

of drawbacks) shall produce over and above the sum of £656,000, in each year of peace, wherein the annual expence, and in the year of war, without regard to such equality, should be appropriated towards the support of the naval force of the empire, in such manner as the parliament of this kingdom shall direct."

To these, four clauses were proposed by Orde, with his own comments on them, according to his instructions from the English state jugglers, under a shew of confirming the legislative independence, and the permanence of the commercial treaty; but, evidently, to obtain, under sanction of parliamentary authority, that no final settlement had been made; and, that both might be new-modelled, or subverted, by some future, unreformed parliament, when existing circumstances should prove favourable. The first and fourth clause clearly point to this; and the whole seem the fabrication of William Pitt, the detestable enemy of Ireland.

"And whereas no law made by the present parliament can, or ought to limit or restrain the free and unquestioned exercise of the discretion of any succeeding parliaments, who must be competent equally, as in the present, to every act of legislation whatever, and to deliberate upon, enact, or decline to enact, any of the regulations or provisions to be considered as essential and fundamental conditions of this settlement.

"And whereas the continuance of the present settlement must depend on the due observance, in both kingdoms, of the several matters herein

declared to be fundamental and essential conditions thereof, according to their true intent, spirit and meaning.

“ Be it declared, that the continuance of the present settlement, and the duration of this act, and of every thing herein contained, shall depend upon the due observance, in the kingdom of Great Britain, of the several matters herein declared to be fundamental and essential conditions of the said settlement according to the true intent, meaning and spirit thereof.

“ Provided, nevertheless, that all the said fundamental and essential conditions shall in all times be held and deemed to be, and to have been duly observed in the kingdom of Great Britain, unless it shall have been expressly declared by a joint address of both houses of parliament of this kingdom to his majesty, that the same have not been duly observed.”

The fraud and imposture of the secretary's bills and clauses, were exposed, and ably opposed, by Henry Grattan.

Mr. Grattan.—“ Sir, I can excuse the right honourable member, who moves you for leave to bring in the bill. He is an Englishman, and contends for the power of his own country, while I am contending for the liberty of mine. He might have spared himself the trouble of stating his own bill. I read it before; I read it in the twenty resolutions; I read it in the English bill, which is, to all intents and purposes, the same, and which he might read, without the trouble of resorting to his own. His comment is of little

moment; a lord lieutenant's secretary is an unsafe commentator on an Irish constitution. The former merit of the right honourable gentleman, in pressing for the original propositions, and contending against the present, which he now supports, may have been very great, and I am willing to thank him for his past services; they may be a private consolation to himself. No more. I differ from him in his account of that transaction. He was pledged to his eleven propositions; his offer was the propositions, ours the taxes; he took the latter, but forgets the former. I leave both, and come to his system. Here it becomes necessary to go back a little—I begin with your free trade obtained in 1779: by that you recovered your right to trade with every part of the world, whose ports were open to you, subject to your own unstipulated duties, the British plantations only excepted. By that you obtained the benefit of your insular situation, the benefit of your western situation, and the benefit of your exemption from intolerable taxes. What these advantages might be, no man could say; but any man, who had seen the struggle you had made, during a century of depression, could foresee, that a spirit of industry operating upon a state of liberty in a young nation, must, in the course of time, produce signal advantages. The sea is like the earth, to non-exertion a waste; to industry a mine. This trade was accompanied with another, a plantation trade; in this, you retained your right to trade directly with the British plantations in a variety of arti-

cles, without a reference to British duties; by this, you obtained a right to trade with the British plantations directly in each and every other article, subject to the rate of British duty; by this, you obtained a right to select the article, so that the general trade should not hang on the special conformity; and by this, you did not covenant to affect, exclude, or postpone the produce of foreign plantations. The reason was obvious; you demanded two things, a free trade and a plantation trade; had the then minister insisted on a covenant to exclude the produce of foreign plantations, he had given you a plantation trade, instead of a free trade, (whereas your demand was both,) and his grant had been inadequate, unsatisfactory, and inadmissible. These points of trade being settled, a third, in the opinion of some, remained; namely, the intercourse with England, or the channel trade. A successful political campaign, an unsuccessful harvest, the poverty of not a few, together with the example of England, brought forward, in the year 1783, a number of famishing manufacturers with a demand of protecting duties; the extent of their demand was idle, the manner of conveying that demand tumultuary, but not being wholly resisted, nor yet adequately assisted, they laid the foundation of another plan, which made its appearance in 1785, opposite, indeed, to their wishes, and fatal to their expectation; this was the system of reciprocity; a system fair in its principles, and, in process of time, likely to be beneficial, but not likely to be of any great pre-

sent advantage, other than by stopping the growth of demand, allaying a commercial fever, and producing settlement and incorporation with the people of England; this system was founded on the only principle, which could obtain, between two independent nations, equality, and the equality consisted in similarity of duty; now, as the total abatement of duties on both sides had driven the Irishman out of his own market, as the raising our duties on the British standard had driven the Englishman out of the Irish market, a third method was resorted to, the abatement of British duty to the Irish standard: but then this equality of duty was inequality of trade; for, as the Englishman, with that duty against him, had beaten you in the Irish market, with that duty in his favour he must keep you out of the English; so that, under this arrangement, the English manufacturer continued protected, and the Irish manufacturer continued exposed, and the abatement of duty was no more than disarming the argument of retaliation. Had the arrangement stopped here, it had been unjust, indeed; but as Ireland was to covenant, that she would not raise her duties on British manufactures, England, on her part, was to covenant, that she would not diminish her preference in favour of Irish linen, and the adjustment amounted to a covenant, that neither country, in their respective markets, would affect the manufacture of the other by any operative alteration of duty; however, the adjustment did not stop at the home manufacture, it went to plantation produce, and

here you stood on two grounds, law and justice; law, because you only desired, that the same words of the same act of navigation, should have the same construction on one side the channel as they have on the other; how they had ever borne a different one, I cannot conceive, otherwise than by supposing, that in your ancient state of dependency you were not entitled to the common benefit of the mother tongue; the answer to this argument[†] was unsatisfactory, that England had altered the law; but, if England had so altered the law, it ceased to impose the same restrictions, and confer the same advantages, and then a doubt might arise, whether the act of navigation was the law of Ireland, so that you seemed entitled to the construction, or free from the act. Now it is of more consequence to England, that you should be bound by the act of navigation, than to Ireland to have the benefit of the fair construction of it. But you stood on still better ground, justice. Was it just that you should receive plantation goods from England, and that England should not receive them from you? Here, if you do not find the law equal, you may make it so, for as yet you are a free parliament.

I leave this part of the subject; equality of duty but no present equality of trade. I come to that part of the adjustment which is inequality of both; and first, that part which relates to the primum of your manufactures. When the original propositions were argued, gentlemen exclaimed, “ England reserves her wool, and

Ireland does not reserve her woollen yarn," it was answered, "Ireland may if she pleases," what will those gentlemen now say, when England reserves both; the primum of her manufactures, and of yours; and not only woollen yarn but linen yarn, hides, &c.? To tell me that this exportation is beneficial to Ireland, is to tell me nothing; the question is not about stopping the export, but giving up the regulation, in instances where England retains the power of regulation, and the act of prohibition. To tell me, that this exportation is necessary for England, is to tell me nothing, but that you are material to England, and therefore should have obtained at least equal terms. I own, to assist the manufactures of Great Britain as far as is not absolutely inconsistent with those of Ireland, is to me an object; but still the difference recurs, she is not content with voluntary accommodation on your part; but exacts perpetual export from you in the very article in which she retains absolute prohibition—no new prohibition—every prohibition beneficial to England was laid before—none in favour of Ireland. Ireland, till 1779, was a province, and every province is a victim; your provincial state ceased, but before the provincial regulations are done away, this arrangement establishes a principle of *uti possidetis*, that is, Great Britain shall retain all her advantages, and Ireland shall retain all her disadvantages. But I leave this part of the adjustment, where reciprocity is disclaimed in the outset of treaty, and the rudiment of manufacture; I come to instances

of more striking inequality, and first, your situation in the East. You are to give a monopoly to the present, or any future East India Company, during its existence, and to the British nation for ever after. It has been said, that the Irishman in this is in the same situation as the Englishman; but there is this difference, the difference between having, and not having the trade; the British Parliament has judged it most expedient for Great Britain to carry on her trade to the East, by an exclusive company; the Irish Parliament is now to determine it most expedient for Ireland to have no trade at all in these parts. This is not a surrender of the political rights of the constitution, but of the natural rights of man; not of the privileges of parliament, but of the rights of nations,—not to sail beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Streights of Magellan, an awful interdict! Not only European settlements, but neutral countries excluded, and God's providence shut out in the most opulent boundaries of creation; other interdicts go to particular places for local reasons, because they belong to certain European states, but here are neutral regions forbidden, and a path prescribed to the Irishman on open sea. Other interdicts go to a determinate period of time, but here is an eternity of restraint; you are to have no trade at all, during the existence of any company, and no free trade to those countries after its expiration; this resembles rather a judgment of God than an act of the legislature, whether you measure it by immensity of space or infinity of dura-

tion, and has nothing human about it except its presumption.

What you lose by this surrender, what you forfeit by giving up the possibility of intercourse with so great a proportion of the inhabited globe, I cannot presume to say; but this I can say, that gentlemen have no right to argue from present want of capital against future trade, nor to give up their capacity to trade, because they have not yet brought that capacity into action, still less have they a right to do so without the shadow of compensation, and least of all on the affected compensation, which, trifling with your understanding as well as interest, suffers a vessel to go to the West, in its way to the East. I leave this uncompensated surrender—I leave your situation in the East, which is blank—I leave your situation in the East, which is the surrender of trade itself; and I come to your situation in the West, which is a surrender of its freedom. You are to give a monopoly to the British plantations, at their own taxes; before, you did so only in certain articles, with a power of selection, and then only as long as you pleased to conform to the condition, and without any stipulation to exclude foreign produce. It may be very proper to exclude foreign produce by your own temporary laws, and at your own free will and option, but now you are to covenant to do so for ever, and thereby you put the trade out of your own power for ever, and you give to the English, West as well as East, an eternal monopoly for their plantation produce, in the taxing and regulating of

which, you have no sort of deliberation or interference, and over which Great Britain has a complete supremacy. Here you will consider the advantage you reap from that monopoly, and judge how far it may be expedient to set up against yourselves that monopoly for ever; there is scarcely an article of the British plantation, that is not out of all proportion dearer than the same article is in any other part of the globe, nor any other article that is not produced elsewhere, for some of which articles you might establish a mart for your manufactures, Portugal, for instance, capable of being a better market for our drapery than Great Britain. This enormity of price is aggravated by an enormity of tax. What, then, is this covenant? To take these articles from the British plantations, and from none other, at the present high rates and taxes, and to take them at all times to come, subject to whatever further rates and taxes the parliament of Great Britain shall enact. Let me ask you, why did you refuse protecting duties to your own people? Because they looked like a monopoly; and will you give to the West India merchant, and the West India planter something more? A monopoly, where the monopolist is, in some degree, the law-giver. The principle of equal duty, or the same restriction, is not the shadow of security; to make such a principle applicable to, the objects must be equal; but here the objects are not only dissimilar, but opposite. The condition of England is great debt, and greater capital; great incumbrance,

but still greater abilities: the condition of Ireland, little capital, but a small debt; poverty, but exemption from intolerable taxes. Equal burdens will have opposite effects, they will fund the debt of one country and destroy the trade of the other; high duties will take away your resource, which is exemption from them; but will be a fund for Great Britain: thus the colony principle in its extent is dangerous to a very great degree. Suppose Great Britain should raise the colony duties to a still greater degree, to answer the exigency of some future war, or to fund her present debt, you must follow, for by this bill you would have no option in foreign trade; you must follow, not because you wanted the tax, but lest your exemption from taxes should give your manufactures any comparative advantage. Irish taxes are to be precautions against the prosperity of Irish manufactures! You must follow because your taxes here would be no longer measured by the wants of the country or the interest of her commerce, because we should have instituted a false measure of taxation; the wants and the riches of another country, which exceeds you much in wants, but infinitely more in riches. I fear we should have done more, we should have made English jealousy the barometer of Irish taxes. Suppose this country should in any degree establish a direct trade with the British plantations, suppose the apprehensions of the British manufacturers in any degree realized, they may dictate your duties, they may petition the British parliament to raise certain

duties, which shall not affect the articles of their intercourse, but may stop yours; or, which shall affect the articles of their intercourse a little and annihilate yours; thus they may by one and the same duty raise a revenue in England, and destroy a rival in Ireland. Camblets are an instance of the former, and every valuable plantation-import an instance of the latter; your option in foreign trade had been a restraint on England, or a resource to Ireland, but under this adjustment you give up your foreign trade, and confine yourself to that which you must not presume to regulate. The exclusion of foreign plantation-produce would seem sufficient, for every purpose of power and domination; but to aggravate, and it would seem, to insult, the independent states of North America are most ungraciously brought into this arrangement, as if Ireland was a British colony, or North America continued a part of the British dominion; by the resolutions almost all the produce of North America was to be imported to Ireland, subject to British duties; the bill is more moderate, and only enumerates certain articles, but what right has Great Britain to interfere in our foreign trade, what right has she to dictate to us on the subject of North America trade? How far this country may be further affected by clogging her plantation trade and surrendering her free trade, I shall not for the present stop more minutely to inquire, but I must stop to protest against one circumstance in this arrangement, which should not accompany any arrangement, which would be fatal to settlement

itself, and tear asunder the bands of faith and affection; the circumstance I mean, is the opening of the settlements of the colony trade, and free trade of 1779: this adjustment takes from you the power of choosing the article, so that the whole covenant hangs on the special circumstance, and takes from you your option in the produce of foreign plantations, and even of America. It is a revision in peace of the settlements of war; it is a revocation in peace of the acquisition of war. I here ask, by what authority? By what authority is Ireland obliged now to enter into a general account for past acquisitions? Did the petition of the manufacturers desire it? Did the addresses of the last session desire it? Did the minister, in this session, suggest it? No; I call for authority, whereby we can be justified in waving the benefit of past treaties, and bringing the whole relative situation of this country into question in an arrangement, which only professes to settle her channel trade? I conceive the settlements of the last war are sacred; you may make other settlements with the British nation, but you will never make any so beneficial as these are; they were the result of a conjuncture miraculously formed, and fortunately seized. The American war was the Irish harvest. From that period, as from the lucky moment of your fate, your commerce, constitution, and mind took form and vigour; and to that period, and to a first and salient principle, must they recur for life and renovation.—It is therefore I consider those settlements as sacred, and from them I am

naturally led to that part of the subject which relates to compensation, the payment which we are to sustain; certainly compensation cannot apply to the free trade supposing it uninvaded, first, because that trade was your right; to pay for the recovery of what you never should have lost, had been to a great degree unjust and derogatory; secondly, because that free trade was established in 1779, and the settlement then closed and cannot be opened now; to do so were to destroy the faith of treaties, to make it idle to enter into the present settlement, and to render it vain to enter into any settlement with the British minister. The same may be said of the colony trade; that too was settled in 1779, on terms then specified not now to be opened, clogged, conditioned or circumscribed; still less does compensation apply to the free constitution of 1782. His majesty then informed you from the throne, "these things come unaccompanied with any stipulation," besides, the free constitution, like the free trade, was your right. Freemen wont pay for the recovery of right; payment had derogated from the claim of right; so we then stated to ministry. It was then thought that to have annexed subsidy to constitution had been a barren experiment on public poverty, and had married an illustrious experiment on the feelings of the nation, and had been neither satisfaction to Ireland, nor revenue to Great Britain. This bolder policy, this happy art, which saw how much may be got by tax, and how much must be left to honour, which made a bold push for the

heart of the nation, and leaving her free to acquire, took a chance for her disposition to give, had its effect, for since that time until the present most unfortunate attempt, a great bulk of the community were on the side of government, and the parliamentary constitution was a guarantee for public peace.

See then what you obtain without compensation, a colony trade, a free trade, the independency of your judges, the government of your army, the extinction of the unconstitutional powers of your council, the restoration of the judicature of your lords, and the independency of your legislature?

See now what you obtain by compensation—a covenant not to trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan; a covenant not to take foreign plantation produce, but as the parliament of Great Britain shall permit; a covenant not to take British plantation produce, but as Great Britain shall prescribe; a covenant to make such acts of navigation as Great Britain shall prescribe; a covenant never to protect your own manufactures, never to guard the primum of those manufactures! These things are accompanied, I do acknowledge, with a covenant, on the part of England, to disarm your argument for protecting duties, to give the English language, in the act of navigation, the same construction in Ireland, and to leave our linen markets without molestation or diminution. One should think some God presided over the liberties of this country, who made it frugality in the

Irish nation to continue free, but has annexed the penalties of fine and infamy to the surrender of the constitution! From this consideration of commerce, a question much more high, much more deep, the invaluable question of constitution arises, in which the idea of protecting duties, the idea of reciprocal duties, of countervailing duties, and all that detail, vanish, and the energies of every heart, and the prudence of every head, are called upon to shield this nation, that, long depressed, and at length, by domestic virtue and foreign misfortune, emancipated, has now to defend her newly acquired rights, and her justly acquired reputation; the question is no less than that, which, three years ago, agitated, fired, and exalted the Irish nation—the independency of the Irish parliament! By this bill, we are to covenant that the parliament of Ireland shall subscribe whatever laws the parliament of England shall prescribe, respecting your trade with the British plantations, your trade in the produce of foreign plantations, and part of your trade from the United States of North America! There is also a sweeping covenant or condition, whereby we are to agree to subscribe whatever laws the parliament of England shall prescribe, respecting navigation; the adjustment subjects also your reversionary trade to the East, to the same terms. Over all these objects you are to have no propounding, no deliberative, no negative, no legislative power whatsoever. Here then is an end of your free trade, and your free constitution. I acquit the people of England; an ill-

grounded jealousy for their trade seems aggravated by a well-founded alarm for your liberty; unwilling to relinquish, but when relinquished, too magnanimous and too wise to resume abdicated tyranny; they feel, in these propositions, an honourable solicitude for the freedom of Ireland, and the good faith of Great Britain, and see the darling principles and passions of both countries wounded in an arrangement, which was to compose them for ever. To a proposal, therefore, so little warranted by the great body of the people of England, so little expected by the people of Ireland, so little suggested by the minister, and so involving whatever is dear to your interest, honour, and freedom, I answer, no. I plead past settlements; I insist on the faith of nations. The objection should have been made, when these settlements were making; but now the logic of empire comes too late; no accommodation, no deprecation on this subject; assertion, national assertion, national reassertion! If three years after the recovery of your freedom, you bend, your children, corrupted by your example, will surrender; but, if you stand firm and inexorable, you make a seasonable impression on the people of England, you give a wholesome example to your children, you afford an awful instruction to his majesty's ministers, and make, as the old English did, in the case of their charter, the attempt on Irish liberty, its confirmation and establishment!

However, lest certain glosses should seem to go unanswered, I shall, for the sake of argument,

wave past settlements, and combat the reasoning of the English resolutions, the address, his majesty's answer, and the reasoning of this day. It is here said, that the laws, respecting commerce and navigation, should be similar, and inferred, that Ireland should subscribe the laws of England on those subjects; that is, the same law, the same legislature. But this argument goes a great deal too far: it goes to the army, for the mutiny bill should be the same; it was endeavoured to be extended to the collection of your revenue, and is in train to be extended to your taxes; it goes to the extinction of the most invaluable part of your parliamentary capacity; it is an Union, an incipient and a creeping Union; a virtual Union, establishing one will in the general concerns of commerce and navigation, and reposing that will in the parliament of Great Britain; an Union, where our parliament preserves its existence after it has lost its authority, and our people are to pay for a parliamentary establishment, without any proportion of parliamentary representation. In opposing the right honourable gentleman's bill, I consider myself as opposing an Union in limine, and that argument for Union, which makes similarity of law, and community of interest (reason strong for the freedom of Ireland!) a pretence for a condition, which would be dissimilarity of law, because extinction of constitution, and therefore hostility, not community of interest. I ask, on what experience is this argument founded? Have you ever since your redemption refused to preserve a simi-

larity of law in trade and navigation? Have you not followed Great Britain in all her changes of the act of navigation, during the whole of that unpalatable business, the American war? Have you not excluded the cheap produce of other plantations, in order that Irish poverty might give a monopoly to the dear produce of British colonies? Have you not made a better use of your liberty, than Great Britain did of her power? But I have an objection to this argument, stronger even than its want of foundation in reason and experiment; I hold it to be nothing less, than an intolerance of the parliamentary constitution of Ireland, a declaration that the full and free external legislation of the Irish parliament is incompatible with the British empire. I do acknowledge, that by your external power, you might discompose the harmony of empire, and I add, that by your power of the purse you might dissolve the State; but to the latter you owe your existence in the constitution, and to the former your authority and station in the empire; this argument, therefore, rests the connection upon a new and a false principle, goes directly against the root of parliament, and is not a difficulty to be accommodated, but an error to be eradicated; and if any body of men can still think, that the Irish constitution is incompatible with the British empire, doctrine which I adjure as sedition against the connexion; but if any body of men are justified in thinking, that the Irish constitution is incompatible with the British empire, Perish the Empire! Live the Constitution!

Reduced by this false dilemma to take a part, my second wish is the British empire, my first wish and bounden duty is the liberty of Ireland; but we are told this imperial power is not only necessary for England, but safe for Ireland. What is the present question? what but the abuse of this very power of regulating the trade of Ireland by the British parliament, excluding you, and including herself by virtue of the same words of the same act of navigation? And what was the promovent cause of this arrangement? what but the power you are going to surrender, the distinct and independent external authority of the Irish parliament, competent to question that misconstruction? What is the remedy now proposed? the evil. Go back to the parliament of England; I ask again, what were the difficulties in the way of your eleven propositions? what but the jealousy of the British manufacturers on the subject of trade? And will you make them your parliament, and that too for ever, and that too on the subject of their jealousy, and in the moment they displayed it; safe! I will suppose that jealousy realized, that you rival them in some market abroad, and that they petition their parliament to impose a regulation which shall affect a tonnage which you have, and Great Britain has not; how would you then feel your situation, when you should be obliged to register all this? And how would you feel your degradation, when you should see your own manufacturers pass you by a cypher in the constitution, and deprecate their ruin at the bar

of a foreign parliament—safe! Whence the American war? Whence the Irish restrictions? Whence the misconstruction of the act of navigation? Whence but from the evil of suffering one country to regulate the trade and navigation of another, and of instituting, under the idea of general protectress, a proud domination, which sacrifices the interest of the whole to the ambition of a part, and arms the little passions of the monopolist with the sovereign potency of an imperial parliament; for great nations when cursed with unnatural sway follow but their nature when they invade; and human wisdom has not better provided for human safety than by limiting the principles of human power. The surrender of legislature has been likened to cases that not unfrequently take place between two equal nations covenanting to suspend in particular cases their respective legislative powers for mutual benefit; thus Great Britain and Portugal agree to suspend their legislative power in favour of the wine of the one, and the woollen of the other, but if Portugal had gone further, and agreed to subscribe the laws of England, this covenant had not been a treaty, but conquest; so Great Britain and Ireland may covenant, not to raise high duties on each others manufactures, but if Ireland goes farther, and covenants to subscribe British law, this is not a mutual suspension of the exercise of legislative power, but a transfer of the power itself from one country to another, to be exercised by another hand; such covenant is not reciprocity of trade, it is a surrender of the

government of your trade, inequality of trade, and inequality of constitution. I speak however as if such transfer could take place, but in fact it could not, any arrangement so covenanting is a mere nullity; it could not bind, still less could it bind your successors, for a man is not omnipotent over himself, neither are your parliaments omnipotent over themselves, to accomplish their own destruction and propagate death to their successors; there is in these cases a superior relationship to our respective creators—God and the community, which in the instance of the individual, arrests the hand of suicide, and in that of the political body, stops the act of surrender, and makes man the means of propagation, and parliament the organ to continue liberty, not the engine to destroy it. However though the surrender is void, there are two ways of attempting it, one by a surrender in form, the other by a surrender in substance; appointing another parliament your substitute, and consenting to be its register or stamp, by virtue of which to introduce the law and edict of another land; to cloath with the forms of your law, foreign deliberations, and to preside over the disgraceful ceremony of your own abdicated authority; both methods are equally surrenders, and both are wholly void. I speak on principle, the principle on which you stand—your creation. We, the limited trustees of the delegated power, born for a particular purpose, limited to a particular time, and bearing an inviolable relationship to the people who sent us to parliament, cannot break that relationship,

counteract that purpose, surrender, diminish, or derogate from those privileges we breathe but to preserve. Could the parliament of England covenant to subscribe your laws? Could she covenant that Young Ireland should command and Old England should obey? If such a proposal to England were mockery, to Ireland it cannot be constitution. I rest on authority as well as principle, the authority on which the revolution rests; Mr. Locke, who in his chapter on the abolition of government, says, that the transfer of legislative power is the abolition of the state, not a transfer. Thus I may congratulate this house and myself, that it is one of the blessings of the British constitution, that it cannot perish of a rapid mortality, nor die in a day, like the men who should protect her; any act that would destroy the liberty of the people, is dead-born from the womb; men may put down the public cause for a season, but another year would see old constitution advance the honours of his head, and the good institution of parliament shaking off the tomb to re-ascend in all its pomp and pride, and plenitude and privilege!

Sir, I have stated these propositions and the bill as a mere transfer of external legislative authority to the parliament of Great Britain, but I have understated their mischief, they go to taxation, taxes on the trade with the British plantations, taxes on the produce of foreign plantations, taxes on some of the produce of the United States of North America; they go to port duties, such as Great Britain laid on America! the

mode is varied, but the principle is the same. Here Great Britain takes the stamp of the Irish parliament; Great Britain is to prescribe, and Ireland is to obey! We anticipate the rape by previous surrender, and throw into the scale our honour, as well as our liberty. Do not imagine that all these resolutions are mere acts of regulation; they are solid substantial revenue, great part of your additional duty. I allow the bill excepts rum and tobacco; but the principle is retained, and the operation of it only kept back. I have stated that Great Britain may by these propositions crush your commerce, but shall be told that the commercial jealousy of Great Britain is at an end. But are her wants at an end? Are her wishes for Irish subsidy at an end? No; and may be gratified by laying colony duties on herself, and so raising on Ireland an imperial revenue to be subscribed by our parliament, without the consent of our parliament, and in despite of our people. Or if a minister should please to turn himself to a general excise, if wishing to relieve from the weight of further additional duties the hereditary revenue now alienated, if wishing to relieve the alarms of the English manufacturers, who complain of our exemption from excises, particularly on soap, candles, and leather: he should proceed on those already registered articles of taxation, he might tax you by threats, suggesting that if you refuse to raise an excise on yourself, England will raise colony duties on both.—See what a mighty instrument of coercion this bill and these resolu-

tions—stir and the minister can crush you in the name of Great Britain; he can crush your exports; he can do this in a manner peculiarly mortifying, by virtue of a clause in a British act of parliament that would seem to impose the same restrictions on Great Britain; he can do this in a manner still more offensive, by the immediate means of your own parliament, who would then be an active cypher, and notorious stamp in the hands of Great Britain, to forge and falsify the name and authority of the people of Ireland. I have considered your situation under these propositions with respect to Great Britain: see what would be your situation with respect to the crown? You would have granted to the king a permanent money bill, or a money bill to continue as long as the parliament of Great Britain shall please, with a covenant to increase it as often as the British parliament shall please. By the resolutions a great part of the additional duty would have been so granted; the trade of the country is made dependant on the parliament of Great Britain, and the crown is made less dependent on the parliament of Ireland, and a code of prerogative added to a code of empire. If the merchant after this should petition you to lower your duties on the articles of trade, your answer, “trade is no covenant.” If your constituents should instruct you to limit the bill of supply, or pass a short money bill, your answer, “the purse of the nation like her trade is in covenant.” No more of six months money bills; no more of instructions from con-

stituents; that connection is broken by this bill, pass this you have no constituent—you are not the representative of the people of Ireland, but the register of the British parliament, and the equalizer of British duties!

In order to complete this chain of power, one link, (I do acknowledge) was wanting, a perpetual revenue bill, or a covenant from time to time to renew the bill for the collection thereof. The twentieth resolution, and this bill founded upon it, attain that object. Sir, this house rests on three pillars, your power over the annual mutiny bill; your power over the annual additional duties; your power over the collection of the revenue. The latter power is of great consequence, because a great part of our revenues are granted for ever. Your ancestors were slaves; and for their estates, that is, for the act of settlement, granted the hereditary revenue, and from that moment ceased to be a parliament; nor was it till many years after that parliament revived; but it revived as you under this bill would continue; without parliamentary power; every evil measure derived argument, energy and essence from this unconstitutional fund. If a country gentleman complained of the expences of the crown, he was told a frugal government could go on without a parliament, and that we held our existence, by withholding the discharge of our duty. However, though the funds were granted for ever, the provision for the collection was inadequate; the smuggler learned to evade the penalties, and parliament, though not neces-

sary for granting the hereditary revenue, became necessary for its collections. Here then we rest on three pillars: the annual mutiny bill, the annual additional supply, and the annual collection of the revenue. If you remove all these, this fabric falls; remove any one of them, and it totters; for it is not the mace, nor the chair, nor this dome, but the deliberate voice resident therein that constitutes the essence of parliament. Clog your deliberations, and you are no longer a parliament, with a thousand gaudy surviving circumstances of shew and authority.

Contemplate for a moment the powers this bill presumes to perpetuate; a perpetual repeal of trial by jury; a perpetual repeal of the great charter; a perpetual writ of assistance; a perpetual felony to strike an exciseman!

The late Chief Baron Burgh, speaking on the revenue bill, exclaimed, "you give to the dipping rule, what you should deny to the sceptre."

All the unconstitutional powers of the excise we are about to perpetuate, the constitutional powers of parliament we are to abdicate. Can we do all this? can we make these bulky surrenders, in diminution of the power, in derogation of the pride of parliament, and in violation of those eternal relationships, which the body that represents should bear to the community which constitutes?

The pretence given for this unconstitutional idea is weak indeed; that as the benefits are permanent, so should be the compensation. But trade laws are to follow their nature, revenue

laws to follow their's. On the permanent nature of commercial advantages depends the faith of trade, on the limited nature of revenue laws depends the existence of parliament; but the error of the argument arises from the vice of dealing. It is a market for a constitution, and a logic applicable to barter only, is applied to freedom. To qualify this dereliction of every principle and power, the surrender is made constitutional; that is, the British market for the Irish constitution, the shadow of a market for the substance of a constitution! You are to reserve an option, trade or liberty; if you mean to come to the British market, you must pass under the British yoke. I object to this principle in every shape, whether you are, as the resolution was first worded, directly to transfer legislative power to the British parliament; whether, as it was afterwards altered, you are to covenant to subscribe her acts; or whether, as it is now softened, you are to take the chance of the British market, so long as you wave the blessings of the British constitution—terms dishonourable, derogatory, incapable of forming the foundation of any fair and friendly settlement, injurious to the political morality of the nation; I would not harbour a slavish principle, nor give it the hospitality of a night's lodging in a land of liberty! Slavery is like any other vice, tolerate and you embrace; you should guard your constitution by settled maxims of honour, as well as wholesome rules of law; and one maxim should be, never to tolerate a condition which trenches on the privilege of parlia-

ment, or derogates from the pride of the island. Liberal in matters of revenue, practicable in matters of commerce; on these subjects I would be inexorable; if the genius of Old England came to that bar, with the British constitution in one hand, and in the other an offer of all that England retains, or all that she has lost of commerce, I should turn my back on the latter, and pay my obeisance to the blessings of her constitution, for that constitution will give you commerce, and it was the loss of that constitution that deprived you of commerce. Why are you not now a woollen country? because another country regulated your trade. Why are you not now a country of re-export? because another country regulated your navigation. I oppose the original terms, as slavish, and I oppose the conditional clause as an artful way of introducing slavery, of soothing a high spirited nation into submission by the ignominious delusion, that she may shake off the yoke when she pleases, and once more become a free people. The direct unconstitutional proposition could not have been listened to, and therefore resort is had to the only possible chance of destroying the liberty of the people, by holding up the bright reversion of the British constitution, and the speculation of future liberty, as a consolation for the present submission. But would any gentleman here wear a livery to-night, because he might lay it aside in the morning? or would this house substitute another, because next year it might resume its authority, and once more become the parliament of Ireland? I do not believe

we shall get the British, but I do not want to make an experiment on the British market, by making an experiment likewise on the constitution and spirit of the people of Ireland. But do not imagine if you shall yield for a year, you will get so easily clear of this inglorious experiment; if this is not the British market, why accept the adjustment? And if it is, the benefit thereof may take your deliberate voice. You will be bribed out of your constitution by your commerce; there are two ways of taking away free will, the one by direct compulsion, the other by establishing a præpollent motive. Thus a servant of the crown may lose his free will, when he is to give his vote at the hazard of his office, and thus a parliament would lose its free will, if it acted under a conviction that it exercised its deliberative function at the risk of its commerce. No one question would stand upon its own legs, but each question would involve every consideration of trade, and indeed the whole relative situation of two countries. And I beseech you to consider that situation, and contemplate the powers of your own country, before you agree to surrender them. Recollect that you have now a right to trade with the British plantations, in certain articles, without reference to British duties; that you have a right to trade with the British plantations in every other article, subject to the British duties: that you have a right to get clear of each and of every part of that bargain; that you have a right to take the produce of foreign plantations, subject to your own un-

stipulated duties; that you have a right to carry on a free and unqualified trade with the United States of North America; that you have a right to carry on an experimental trade in countries contiguous to which Great Britain has established her monopolies, the power of trade this, and an instrument of power and station and authority in the empire! Consider that you have likewise a right to the exclusive supply of your own market, and to the exclusive reserve of the rudiment of your manufactures. That you have an absolute dominion over the public purse, and over the collection of the revenue. If you ask me how you shall use these powers, I say, for Ireland, with due regard to the British nation; let them be governed by the spirit of concord, and with fidelity to the connection. But when the mover of the bill asks me to surrender those powers, I am astonished at him. I have neither ears, nor eyes, nor functions to make such a sacrifice. What! that free trade, for which we exerted every nerve in 1779; that free constitution, for which we pledged life and fortune in 1782! Our lives are at the service of the empire; but—our liberties! No—we received them from our Father, who is in Heaven, and we will hand them down to our children. But if gentlemen can entertain a doubt of the mischief of these propositions, are they convinced of their safety? the safety of giving up the government of your trade? No! the mischief is prominent, but the advantage is of a most enigmatical nature. Have gentlemen considered the subject; have they traced

even the map of the countries, the power or freedom of trading with whom they are to surrender for ever? Have they traced the map of Asia, Africa, and America? Do they know the French, Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish settlements? Do they know the neutral powers of those countries, their produce, aptitudes and dispositions? Have they considered the state of North America? its present state, future growth, and every opportunity in the endless succession of time, attending that nurse of commerce and asylum of mankind? Are they now competent to declare, on the part of themselves and all their posterity, that a free trade to those regions will never, in the efflux of time, be of any service to the kingdom of Ireland? If they have information on this subject, it must be by a communication with God, for they have none with man; it must be by inspiration, for it cannot be knowledge. In such circumstances to subscribe this agreement, without knowledge, without even the affectation of knowledge, when Great Britain, with all her experience, and every means of information, from East Indies, West Indies, America, and with the official knowledge of Ireland at her feet, has taken six months to deliberate, and has now produced twenty resolutions, with a history to each, amounting to a code of empire, not a system of commerce: I say, in such circumstances, for Ireland to subscribe this agreement, would be infatuation; an infatuation, to which the nation could not be a party, but would appear to be concluded, or indeed huddled, with all her posterity, into a fal-

lacious arrangement, by the influence of the crown, without the deliberation of parliament, or the consent of the people! This would appear the more inexcusable, because we are not driven to it; adjustment is not indispensable; the great points have been carried! an inferior question, about the home market, has been started, and a commercial fever artificially raised; but while the great points remain undisturbed, the nations cannot be committed. The manufacturers applied for protecting duties, and have failed; the minister offered a system of reciprocity, and succeeded in Ireland, but has failed in England; he makes you another offer, inconsistent with the former, which offer the English do not support, and the Irish deprecate.

We can go on, we have a growing prosperity, and as yet an exemption from intolerable taxes; we can from time to time regulate our own commerce, cherish our manufactures, keep down our taxes, and bring on our people, and brood over the growing prosperity of Young Ireland. In the mean time, we will guard our free trade and constitution, as our only real resources; they were the struggles of great virtue, the result of much perseverance, and our broad base of public action! We should recollect, that this House may now, with peculiar propriety, interpose, because you did, with great zeal and success, on this very subject of trade, bring on the people; and you did, with great prudence and moderation, on another occasion, check a certain description of the people, and you are now called upon, by

consistency, to defend the people. Thus mediating between extremes, you will preserve this island long, and preserve her with a certain degree of renown. Thus faithful to the constitution of the country, you will command and ensure her tranquillity; for our best authority with the people is, protection afforded against the ministers of the crown. It is not public clamour, but public injury, that should alarm you; your high ground of expostulation with your fellow subjects has been your services; the free trade you have given the merchant, and the free constitution you have given the island! Make your third great effort, preserve them; and with them preserve, unaltered, your own calm sense of public right, the dignity of the parliament, the majesty of the people, and the powers of the island! Keep them unsullied, uncovenanted, uncircumscribed, and unstipendiary! These paths are the paths to glory; and let me add, these ways are the ways of peace: so shall the prosperity of your country, though without a tongue to thank you, yet laden with the blessings of constitution and of commerce, bear attestation to your service, and wait on your progress with involuntary praise!"

The principal arguments, urged on this important question, being contained in this eloquent and convincing speech of Mr. Grattan, renders a further insertion of the debates unnecessary. Leave was given to bring in the bill, by a majority of one, 127 opposing it. So small a majority, and so formidable an opposition, caused this measure to be abandoned, after exciting the

attention of the nation upwards of seven months, to the general satisfaction of Ireland; nor was the news thereof ill received in England.

The peasantry of some counties, particularly Kilkenny, raised some disturbances at this time, about tithes; to suppress which, the catholic clergy exerted themselves, as usual in similar cases. This was doing their duty as Christian pastors, and as prudent monitors. Their endeavours failing, parliament interposed.

As during Pitt's administration, every occurrence, that offered a pretext for enlarging the influence of the crown, and undermining the Irish constitution, was greedily seized on, a bill, entitled *An act for improving the police of the city of Dublin*, was introduced by the solicitor general, before a thin house, during the assizes, when country gentlemen attended there. The sense entertained of this attack on liberty, by the city of Dublin, appears from the petition of the freemen and freeholders, presented to the house of commons. It stated, that the bill manifestly tended to subvert public liberty, in the most essential points; that, if passed into a law, it would give a very great additional and most dangerous influence to the crown, in matters which intimately regard not only political freedom, but the personal liberty and domestic quiet of individuals; an influence, which every honest Irishman feels to be at least as extensive as is consistent with the safety of the constitution. That it would be grievous, in point of taxation; and place the first corporation of the kingdom under the in-

fluence of the minister. In the commons, Mr. Conolly strongly opposed the principle of the bill. "It seems it would be urged," he said, "that no person has a suspicion of the bill: I suspect the principles of it, because I suspect administration—I suspect its intention, because I suspect administration—I suspect an administration, that promises this country trade, in lieu of which she gives us £140,000 in taxes—I suspect an administration, that when we ask for bread gives us a stone. And though I wish for order and regulation, still I am convinced, the profits arising from that bill may be purchased too dearly—I see, by one clause, you intend to take the arms out of the hands of the Volunteers. When I reflect on the memorable propositions of 1785, and the sensible measures proposed in 1786, it staggers my faith, and induces me to say, that surely the people ought to be consulted, when you go to alter the constitution. A bill of such magnitude, to insist to hurry it before the house, shews there is a snake in the grass, to crush which every gentleman ought attend." The bill, notwithstanding, was read a second time, the day after its introduction, and passed into a law with the utmost expedition.

Two great objects of this bill were, the disarming the volunteers, and bringing the city of Dublin under ministerial influence. The volunteers had incurred the displeasure of the English government. They must, therefore, be disbanded, and a force, more subservient to the will of the government, substituted in their place. It

was of some consequence, also, to reduce the metropolis, the seat of government and legislation, to passive obedience, like a venal borough. When we consider how quickly advantage was taken of the Right-boy disturbances, to strike this weighty blow, we might lawfully surmise, that they were excited by the emissaries of Cecil the second, whose administration was a compound of hypocrisy, fraud, and tyranny.

To plaister this wound, inflicted on the constitution, Orde brought forward a plan of public education, in the introduction to which, he observed, that there were endowed schools in Ireland, and some richly endowed; but, that the richer the endowment, the worse they answered the intention of the founder; as the master, content with his income, paid little or no attention at all, to the education of youth. This plan never took effect; and was, probably, intended, as a tub to the whale, to amuse a discontented public.

In the year 1787, the disturbances still continued and even encreased, when the parliament voted an address to his majesty, in which, they lament the outrages committed in certain parts of this kingdom, promising to use all the means in their power for suppressing of the same, and maintaining the rights of the established clergy. Mr. Connolly's opinion of these troubles, delivered in his speech on the address, coincides with that formed by myself before I saw it. "I do not rise to move an amendment of, or alteration to the resolution as it now stands. But I shall

trouble the house with a few observations on the unhappy state which it represents the kingdom to be in.

“ Now, supposing that these disturbances are as extensive as have been represented, but I hope in God they are not—supposing they are as formidable as government have represented them in their proclamations, are not the laws at present in being sufficient to restore order? They are abundantly so, if properly enforced. And hence, my suspicion is excited, when I behold administration attempting by insinuation to establish the necessity of new laws for unnecessary purposes, or for something worse. I am convinced that had administration been active, they might have checked these disturbances in embryo. I will ask, can any man entertain a doubt of it? And when they did not, what can we infer from it, but that there was some dark design in suffering them to come to maturity?

This may seem to be a reflection upon our worthy chief governor—I know him to be an honest man, and the friend of both countries, and it is not him I suspect—it is the administration. And why do I suspect administration? Because of their conduct on the propositions; when they wish to prove, and to have us believe, that the returned propositions were identically the same as the original ten, and were ready to pass them with the same alacrity and vigour, although every man in the nation was convinced that they coerced the commerce, and invaded the constitution of this kingdom.

But not to lose more time, I will ask the gentlemen on the other side of the house to explain the tendency of that paragraph in the address? My fears can do no harm; but I should be happy they were done away. I again call upon gentlemen for an explanation. [Here Mr. Connolly made a considerable pause.] No answer! then I take it, that my suspicions are justly founded, and that no answer can be given. Good God, Sir, is it consistent with sense to enact new laws, before you try whether the old ones would answer the purpose? And this is the case, for the supineness of the magistrates has been admitted on all sides. But, Sir, I consider this as a measure to intimidate the protestants of the kingdom, and to furnish a pretext for an unconstitutional police-bill. If these turbulences are not exaggerated, then government are highly censurable for not having prevented them in time; and if they are not, they are doubly so, for certain ill-founded alarms; so that in either case they are culpable in the extreme, and forfeit the confidence of the people.

The peasantry of the south, we are told, have the greatest meetings ever known; nay they are in arms, as the proclamations tell us. Well, why did not government in the infancy of insurrection suppress it? Would not any moderate man be inclined to suspect them of misconduct, and of abetting the outrages of the south, when they recollected that the protestant insurgents in 1763 were tried for high treason? What is the inference to be deduced from this fact? Just this:

that government were not so well disposed to punish. Strange, indeed, that protestants in 1763, should be indicted for high treason, and that the catholics in 1787, should be guilty of a higher crime, and only indicted simply for a misdemeanor. Let the friends of government reconcile this with the idea of "vigorous exertions." I will no longer engross the time of the house, but hope that government will, in no shape whatever, attempt to subvert the liberty of the subject, or trench on the constitution."

It is evident, that the existing laws were very sufficient to quell the disturbance in embryo; and, if they had suffered the volunteer institutions to subsist, insurgency would soon disappear. Mr. Longfield then remarked. "Since I came up to Dublin," said he, "I begin to doubt, whether I generally reside in the county of Cork or not, I hear such loud and numerous reports of violences, outrages and disorders in that country, a word of which I never heard at home, that I begin to think I have mistaken the place of my abode. But what is truly terrible in its consequence is, that by the speech from the throne I see it is taken for granted, that all those reports are true, and a scandalous imputation and reproach is thrown, not only on a great and respectable county, but on a whole province: I do, therefore, think it my duty to state to the House, what really is the fact, and they will see, that the interposition of the magistrates alone, without the aid of new or sanguinary laws, or without the interposition of the military, is sufficient to

reduce the formidable insurgents about whom such a clamour has been raised.

When I went down to the county of Cork last summer, I found no disturbance existing, though in the last session of parliament I had been told there was. I live near the town of Cloyne; my demesne bounds it. The right reverend prelate of that diocese had not then applied for any military assistance, but lived quietly secure at home, in the protection of the neighbouring gentlemen. The first thing that could be called a disturbance was of such a kind, that I was induced to think government had a hand in it. (This caused much noise in the house.) Some very respectable people of Cloyne came to me, and told me that a bailiff belonging to the high-sheriff had been sent amongst them, with notices to provide a quantity of arms and ammunition, and a number of horses, by the following Sunday, for the use of captain Right. I thought it odd enough that a sheriff's bailiff should be employed on such a business, and, as a magistrate, I sent for him. He confessed the fact of having served the notices, and said he was employed by captain Right. I desired him to give information against captain Right, which he refused, upon which I committed him to gaol, returned the bills against him, and brought persons of credit who had sworn examinations and were ready to prosecute, but to my astonishment I found that the grand jury had thrown out the bills. I spoke to Mr. Kemmis, the crown solicitor, who said he could do nothing without

an order from government, and as I was not in the habit of asking favours from government, I there let the matter drop.

This was the first disturbance I had heard of; the next was that captain Right swore some of the people in my neighbourhood to observe his regulations; yet another gentleman and I, attended by a single servant, made this formidable captain Right a prisoner, and safely lodged him in gaol. Such being the case, there ought not to be a general charge of delinquency against the county of Cork, because some of its magistrates were supine. After what I have mentioned, government sent forces down to my part of the country; two of their officers were Englishmen, one a Scotchman; the people could not be supposed to have any very great partiality for them, or they for the people, yet they lived unmolested in good quarters, and never had occasion to be called out to quell any disturbance.

A nobleman of great talents, knowledge, experience and sagacity, had the chief command of the troops sent into the province of Munster. I wish we had his report, if there was any regular way of coming at his report; you would there see that none but the lowest wretches, who groan under the most intolerable oppressions, were engaged in any disturbance. If that noble lord was here, he would make you shudder at the account of their miseries."

The attorney-general endeavoured to find another cause for it, in the wretchedness of the Munster peasantry. After detailing the progress

of the Right-boys, he said, “ I am very well acquainted with the province of Munster, and I know that it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable peasantry in that province. I know that the unhappy tenantry are ground to powder by relentless landlords. I know, that, far from being able to give the clergy their just dues, they have not food or raiment for themselves, the landlord grasps the whole; and sorry I am to add, that, not satisfied with the present extortion, some landlords have been so base, as to instigate the insurgents to rob the clergy of their tithes, not in order to alleviate the distresses of the tenantry, but that they might add the clergy’s share to the cruel rack-rents already paid. I fear it will require the utmost ability of parliament to come to the root of those evils. The poor people of Munster live in a more abject state of poverty, than human nature can be supposed able to bear—their miseries are intolerable, but they do not originate with the clergy; nor can the legislature stand by, and see them take the redress into their own hands. Nothing can be done for their benefit, while the country remains in a state of anarchy.”

After stating what he considered contributed to spread these commotions, viz. the offence beingailable; the magistrates criminally neglectful and insufficient; he added: “ A charge has been made against government, for suppressing informations against a sheriff’s bailiff; and from this it has even wisely been inferred, that government abets the Right-boys. Now as I have the

informations in my hand, I shall submit them to the House, and whether it was possible to strain an indictment out of them.

“ This is the information of Daniel Duggan, sheriff’s bailiff, who acknowledges, that on the evening of Monday the 15th of June, returning home to Cloyne, he had occasion to stop ———. He further confessed, that he was then overtaken by two men, one of them a slender man in black clothes, who asked his name and where he dwelt; which being told, he asked if he knew Nick Dalton, John Ahern, and William Power? He said he did; on which he desired him to go and tell them, captain Right would be with them on Saturday night. He bid the man in black go himself, who said, if he did not go, he would make an example. Being therefore in dread of his life, he went to the house of Dalton, and delivered him the said message; afterwards meeting Ahern on the road, he delivered him his said message: and further sayeth not ———

‘The next is the information of Catherine Ahern, wife of John Ahern. She swears, that she came up to her husband, on the road between Cloyne and her house: that, on her coming up, her husband told her Duggan had a summons for him from the whiteboys: that Duggan made no reply: that deponent and her husband returned home; and that the man in company with Duggan never spoke one word.

‘The next information is that of John Ahern. In substance the same as Catherine Ahern’s.

Now, I am bold to say, that upon these infor-

mations it would puzzle all the crown lawyers in the three kingdoms to form an indictment, and if I had been in the place of the learned and honourable gentleman that was sent down to prosecute, I should not have hesitated a moment to have superseded the committal, and discharged the man without bail.—A man pulls out papers, which in the night, another man believes to be summonses, and for this he is to be sent to gaol, and prosecuted for high treason. The learned gentleman very properly rejected the information as insufficient; in so doing, he did honour to his judgment, and to the discernment of those who employed him, and who could not possibly have selected a man whose head and whose heart more eminently entitle him to trust and to confidence.

If any gentleman entertains a doubt concerning the facts I have referred to, I am ready to lay the proofs upon the table. But they are of too great notoriety; therefore, to detain the committee no longer, I move you, and it was agreed, “That it is the opinion of this committee, that some further provisions by statute are indispensably necessary to prevent tumultuous risings and assemblies, and for the more adequate and essential punishment of persons guilty of outrage, riot and illegal combination, and of administering and taking unlawful oaths.”

The supineness of the magistrates, similar to the conduct of the northern magistrates, furnishes a clue to the authors of these disturbances. The attorney-general endeavoured to find another cause for it, in the wretchedness of the Munster

peasantry. It is true, he accuses the magistrates of inattention! But were they deprived of their commissions, or punished, in any manner, for their neglect of duty? Alas! all, who have seen that province, must agree with his melancholy picture of the deplorable misery of the Munster peasantry, starving on as rich a soil as any in the world; but this intolerable hardship was not the sole cause of their tumultuary proceedings. If that were the case, their tumults would be as incessant as their misery. Gad-fly emissaries fretted their sores, pointed out combination and rising out as the remedy, and promised the patronage of some great men unknown. Allowing, that nothing can be done for them, or the poor labourers of Ireland in general, while the country remains in a state of anarchy, to which add dysarchy, encreased ferocity of criminal law, was a wretched redress for the wretchedness he laments; or rather feigns to lament. The extremes of no government, or bad government, can administer no relief: so far Mr. Attorney-general is right.

The petition of the Presbyterian Clergy was rejected, praying for aid to establish an academy for educating their youth for the sacred function, under the superintendence and direction of the General Synod of Uster.

The speech of Mr. Ogilvie, in the debate on the commercial treaty between France and England, as affecting the latter, but, principally, as affecting the interests of Ireland, abounds with good sense and sound argument. His observa-

tions, as affecting England, may be reduced to two propositions: that the mercantile and monied interests had acquired an ascendancy in Britain, in the direction of foreign affairs, and the formation of treaties: that every state, in which these avaricious classes obtained such ascendancy, did thereby perish, instanced in Carthage and Holland. While the Hamilcars and Hannibals were at the head of the nobility and gentry, the victorious arms of Carthage menaced imperial Rome. When Hanno and the mercantile interest prevailed, their armies were beaten, their generals disgraced. Carthage fell, after a delusive peace, victim to the avarice of her mercantile and monied men. “ Nor is the present situation of Holland, a less striking example of the truth of the above observation. While the princes of the house of Orange, at the head of the nobility and landed interest, directed the government of the States, they were able, even in the infancy of their existence, not only to stem the encroaching violence of the French arms, but to tear the triumphant laurels from the brow of their haughty monarch, Louis XIV. But how dreadful has been the reverse, since their government has fallen into the hands of the democracy and the mercantile interest! They have formed leagues of friendship and treaties of commerce, with their former enemy; their fleets and armies have been neglected, their honour and dignity sacrificed to their avarice. And from the dignified situation they once held in the scale of Europe, they have dwindled into an insignificant province, under the protection of

that very kingdom whose arms they formerly resisted with success. The first part of the parallel, in both instances, applies strictly to the history of Great Britain, with respect to France; and while similar causes continue to produce similar effects, I can see no reason to expect an extraordinary interposition in our favour."

Mr. Ogilvie entertained much apprehension from the consequences of the commercial treaty with France; such as lulling Britain into a fatal security to the neglect of her fleets and armies. The event has not justified the prediction. England has lapsed into the opposite extreme, and is become more obstinately belligerent than ever.

During this session of parliament, an ineffectual attempt was made to limit the pension list. This was on the increase, as well as the national debt, notwithstanding an increase of taxes, professedly granted to equalize the revenue and expenditure. The nation was likewise amused with Orde's system of education, which came to nothing. Parliament was prorogued on the 24th of July, 1787; on the 24th of October, his grace the duke of Rutland died, and on the 16th of December, his excellency George Nugent Grenville Temple, marquis of Buckingham, succeeded to the viceroyalty of Ireland.

The session of 1788 was chiefly distinguished by the powerful but unsuccessful exertions of the Right Hon. Henry Grattan, to ease the country of the burden of tithes.

The year following, 1789, his Majesty's indisposition excited public attention, and parliamen-

tary enquiry. The public councils took a different direction in the two countries. On the 5th of February, the lord lieutenant acquainted parliament, with the melancholy indisposition of his Majesty, and his inability to discharge the duties of government. The secretary to the lord lieutenant moved the house to resolve itself into a committee, on the Monday se'nnight, to take the state of his Majesty's health into consideration. This delay, for the purpose of regulating the proceedings of the Irish parliament by that of Great Britain, was opposed, as derogatory to the independence of the kingdom, and the dignity of parliament; and Wednesday appointed, by a majority of 128 to 74. The business of supply was postponed to the 12th of February. On the 11th, after a violent debate, the house of commons resolved, without a division, that an Address should be presented to the Prince of Wales, requesting him to take on himself the government of the kingdom, as regent, during his Majesty's incapacity. In this, on the motion of the earl of Charlemont, the House of Lords concurred. On the 19th, both houses waited on the lord lieutenant with their Address, requesting him to transmit the same; which he positively refused to comply with, alleging his oath and official duty. Hereupon both houses resolved to send some of their own members, to present the Address to the Prince of Wales. This was followed by a vote of censure on the lord lieutenant, and short money bills. But the fortunate recovery of his Majesty terminated their vigorous proceedings in favour

of the Prince of Wales. The committee of the two houses arrived in London on the 25th, and the next day presented the following Address to the Prince.

“ To his Royal Highness George Prince of Wales. The humble Address of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Knights, Citizens and Burgesses, in parliament assembled.

“ May it please your Royal Highness, we, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons of Ireland in parliament assembled, beg leave to approach your Royal Highness, with hearts full of the most loyal and affectionate attachment to the person and government of your royal father, to express the deepest and most grateful sense of the numerous blessings which we have enjoyed under that illustrious Louse, whose accession to the throne of these realms has established civil and constitutional liberties on a basis which, we trust, will never be shaken; and at the same time to condole with your Royal Highness upon the grievous malady with which it has pleased Heaven to afflict the best of sovereigns.

“ We have, however, the consolation of reflecting, that this severe calamity hath not been visited upon us, until the virtues of your Royal Highness have been so matured as to enable your Royal Highness to discharge the duties of an important trust, for the performance whereof, the eyes of all his Majesty's subjects of both kingdoms are directed to your Royal Highness.

“ We therefore beg leave humbly to request, that your Royal Highness will be pleased to take upon you the government of this realm, during the continuance of his Majesty’s present indisposition, and no longer; and under the style and title of Prince Regent of Ireland, in the name and on the behalf of his Majesty, to exercise and administer, according to the laws and constitution of this kingdom, all regal powers, jurisdictions, and prerogatives, to the crown and government thereof belonging.”

To this his Royal Highness returned the following answer.

“ My Lords and Gentlemen. The Address from the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons of Ireland, which you have presented to me, demands my warmest and earliest thanks. If any thing could add to the esteem and affection I have for the people of Ireland, it would be the loyal and affectionate attachment to the person and government of the King, my father, manifested in the Address of the two houses.

“ What they have done, and their manner of doing it, is a new proof of their undiminished duty to his Majesty, of their uniform attachment to the house of Brunswick, and their constant attention to maintain inviolate the concord and connexion between the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, so indispensably necessary to the prosperity, the happiness, and the liberties of both.

If in conveying my grateful sentiments on their conduct, in relation to the king, my father, and to the inseparable interest of the two kingdoms, I find it impossible to express adequately my feelings on what relates to myself, I trust you will not be the less disposed to believe, that I have an understanding to comprehend the value of what they have done, a heart that must remember, and principles that will not suffer me to abuse their confidence.

But the fortunate change which has taken place in the circumstance which gave occasion to the address agreed to by the lords and commons of Ireland, induced me to delay, for a few days, giving a final answer, trusting, that the joyful event of his majesty's resuming the personal exercise of his royal authority, may then render it only necessary for me to repeat those sentiments of gratitude and affection to the loyal and generous people of Ireland, which I feel indelibly imprinted on my heart."

On the 14th of March, the lord-lieutenant acquainted parliament, that his majesty was enabled personally to exercise the royal authority; and relied on their readiness for the usual support of government. Both houses answered by addresses of congratulation, and promises of ample support. A day of public thanksgiving was appointed, and the happy event was celebrated by public rejoicings throughout Ireland.

This appointment of the regent, unfettered, in unison with the inclination of the nation, in opposition to the orders of the British minister,

suited not the views of the ambitious Pitt, to separate the parliament and the people, to render it an object of contempt and aversion, the easier to accomplish its extinction. While the protestant, empowered to enslave, degrade and impoverish his Catholic countrymen, the majority of the nation, submitted to the commercial and legislative restrictions of Britain, a union was far from being a desideratum with the British minister. But ingenuity exhausted to prevent the further growth of popery, America in rebellion, the situation of Ireland and America was contrasted; the protestant reflected, and the thick film of prejudice was removed. Session after session, the splendid talents of enlightened members of the Irish house of commons were strenuously directed to burst the fetters of British commercial and legislative restriction; and session after session, majorities, at the nod of the minister, repelled the novel attempt. But events came to their aid. The navies of France and Spain found employment for British men of war, different from that of the blockade of Irish ports. America successfully resisted; the standing army, withdrawn from the British isles, was occupied in its subjugation; invasion was apprehended, and the Volunteers appeared. The dread of invasion dispelled, rights, withheld from the loyalty of Ireland, offered to the rebellion of America, roused a spirit of indignation in the nation. The press spoke the language of freedom. Corporations, cities, counties, volunteer corps, above all, the Volunteer Convention at Dungannon, in

union with the patriots in parliament, demanded the restoration of Ireland's rights. The minister yielded. The conduct of England, the placed and the pensioned now loudly condemned. Free trade was granted, legislative independence acknowledged, and Ireland obtained a rank among the nations of the earth. To retain these important advantages, reform of parliament alone was wanting. This the Volunteers attempted. Intolerance frustrated it. The Earl of Charlemont, and many of the Volunteers, would not admit of Catholic emancipation. Absurdly, they desired to possess the plenitude of freedom, surrounded by slaves. Unsupported by the majority of the nation, they attempted to dislodge the British minister from his strongest hold, the corruptibility of the Irish parliament. The Dublin Volunteer Convention Address for Reform was disregarded. Peace was concluded. No longer formidable, the Volunteers were slighted. Pitt became premier, and large majorities obeyed his commands. Scarcely did he guide the helm of the state, until he endeavoured to regain the legislative supremacy, so lately wrested. Commercial propositions, stated to be for the advantage of both countries, insidiously conveying the so-much desired controul over the commerce of Ireland, were submitted to the respective parliaments. The attempt was premature. Petitions, on the table of the House of Commons, expressed the general abhorrence entertained in Ireland of them. But the manufacturers of England had not entered into the views of the minister; they

feared the possibility of the trifling manufactures of Ireland interfering with their interests; their petitions, against the propositions, appeared before the Commons of England, and the measure was abandoned. Notwithstanding the able exposure of the insidiousness of this measure,* Ireland had the mortification to behold a majority marshalled for their enactment, in open defiance of the public voice. But Pitt was digging the grave of Ireland's independence. Every effort was used to separate the parliament and the people. The nightly guard of Dublin, the constitutional watch, under the controul of the parishioners, was removed; and the silent, surly policeman, accoutred *à la militaire*, under the direct controul of the government, substituted, at an enormous expence. Now the plans of Mr. Pitt met with a temporary derangement, the health of the sovereign was attacked, the minister's situation was considered precarious, the landed interest coalesced, and parliament and people for the last time were identified. But the stability of the British minister being again certain, the placed and the pensioned forsook the patriotic ranks. Measures of influence were adopted: places formed, peers created, resumable offices re-granted, the pension list increased, and many of those, who held place or pension at pleasure, displaced. Among the new appointments was that of John Fitzgibbon, then attorney-general, to the lord-chancellorship of Ireland.

* See pp. 239, 240, &c.

This bold, disgusting, willing instrument of Mr. Pitt's ambition, in the Irish house of commons, hesitated not to threaten his native country with a severe fine, for the insubserviency of its parliament to the mandates of the British minister. The threat, and its consequences, the masterly eloquence of Mr. Grattan thus records.* “ ‘Half a million, or more, was expended some years ago to break an opposition; the same, or a greater sum, may be necessary now:’ so said the principal servant of the crown. The house heard him: I heard him: he said it, standing on his legs, to an astonished and an indignant nation; and he said it in the most extensive sense of bribery and corruption. The threat was proceeded on; the peerage was sold; the caitiffs of corruption were every where; in the lobby, in the street, on the steps, and at the door of every parliamentary leader, whose thresholds were worn by the members of the then administration, offering titles to some, amnesty to others, and corruption to all.” Thus was the independence of the Irish parliament sapped.

All further attempts to controul the proceedings of the minister were ineffectual. A bill, rendering revenue-officers incapable of voting for members of parliament, as in England, was rejected. The inhabitants of the city of Dublin had petitioned for the abolition of the new police establishment; complaining of its expence and insecurity, and praying for the re-establishment

* In his Answer to lord Clare's speech, Dub. 1800.

of the constitutional guard, under the controul of the parishioners, founded upon the act of the 17th and 18th of his present majesty. The committee appointed to consider the police accounts, reported, that the police establishment had been attended with unnecessary expence, and ought to be changed. Their report was rejected. And a bill for the appointment of commissioners to inquire into the state of the tithes, was presented, but parliament was prorogued on the 25th of May. In June, the lord chancellor and the speaker of the house of commons were appointed lords-justices, and the marquis of Buckingham deemed it prudent to take his departure secretly.

No chief governor more disappointed the expectations of the people of Ireland. He entered into the capital, “trampling on the hearse of the duke of Rutland, and seated in a triumphal car, drawn by public credulity; on one side fallacious hope, and on the other many-mouthed profession; a figure with two faces, one turned to the treasury, and the other presented to the people; and, with a double tongue, speaking contradictory languages.

“This minister alights; justice looks up to him with empty hopes, and speculation faints with idle alarms; he finds the city a prey to an unconstitutional police; he continues it; he finds the country overburthened with a shameful pension list; he increases it; he finds the house of commons swarming with placemen; he multiplies them; he finds the salary of the secretary increased to prevent a pension; he grants a pension;

he finds the kingdom drained by absentee employments, and by compensations to buy them home; he gives the best reversion in the country to an absentee, his brother! He finds the government, at different times, had disgraced itself by creating sinecures, to gratify corrupt affection; he makes two commissioners of the rolls, and gives one of them to another brother; he finds the second council to the commissioners put down, because useless; he revives it; he finds the boards of accounts and stamps annexed by public compact; he divides them; he finds the boards of custom and excise united by public compact; he divides them; he finds three resolutions, declaring, that seven commissioners are sufficient; he makes nine; he finds the country has suffered by some peculations in the ordnance; he increases the salaries of offices, and gives the places to members, to members of parliament!" Such was his entrance, and such his conduct, delineated by Mr. Grattan, in the next session.

The parliamentary opposition endeavoured by union and energy to supply their numerical deficiency. Imitating the conduct of the opposition in the British parliament, they associated under the name of the Whig Club, adopted a uniform, and had their public dinners, at which the parliamentary campaign was regulated. To insure the support of the nation, some of the most popular characters were admitted, and their resolutions and toasts regularly published. Several associations for similar political purposes, the redress of grievances, were soon after established

in Ulster and the capital, all professing to revive the decaying principles of whiggism.

This year happened the memorable revolution of France, which had such a fatal influence on the destiny of Ireland. Overturning all the established orders and ranks of a powerful kingdom, an ancient and potent monarchy, a numerous and powerful aristocracy and hierarchy, it shook all the neighbouring countries like an earthquake of the moral world.

The year following the earl of Westmoreland opened parliament on the 20th of January. The address contained nothing remarkable. The conduct of government occupied the attention of the patriots, during this short session. The increase of the pension list; the grants of pensions to members of parliament; the sale of peerages, to procure returns to parliament, &c. Mr. Grattan challenged them to go into the inquiry, which they prudently declined, alleging, that common report was not sufficient ground for inquiry.

Mr. Magee, proprietor of the Dublin Evening Post, had been a great sufferer by the persecuting fiats issued against him by the chief justice. Different individuals made affidavit of having suffered losses to the amount of £7,800 by his statements of their conduct in his paper. On these, fiats were issued, and the defendant imprisoned. On the trial of one, that of Mr. Daly, patentee of the theatre, the jury assessed the damages at £200; the fiat was issued at £4,000. To so oppressive a practice the commons were called upon to set bounds. Mr.

George Ponsonby, in a committee appointed to inquire into this subject, moved the following resolution, " That the issuing of writs from the courts of justice, in actions of slander or defamation, where the sum of damages could not be fairly ascertained, and holding persons to special bail in excessive sums, is illegal, and subversive of the liberty of the subject." It was rejected; but the discussion terminated this oppressive practice.

A place-bill, pension-bill, one for disqualifying revenue-officers from voting at elections, and a responsibility-bill, were rejected. The prostitute proved irreclaimable. All bodies in a state of putrescence are hastening to dissolution. The incorrigible corruption of the Irish parliament in a few years afterwards occasioned its extinction.

Parliament was prorogued on the 5th of April, and soon after dissolved. The elections for the new were chiefly remarkable by the spirit displayed by the corporations of Dublin. After a contest of some days, between the government candidates, aldermen Exshaw and Sankey, and the patriotic, the Right Hon. Lord Henry Fitzgerald and Mr. Grattan, the corporations marched from their halls, preceded by bands of music, and appropriate banners, and decided the election. Grattan and Fitzgerald were drawn triumphantly through the city, followed by the corporations. The guild of Merchants, on their banners, bore " no aldermanic influence—the rights of the people—the voice of the people—a ship, and may the gales of freedom fill our sails;" the Tailors

bore "virtue triumphant;" the Smiths, "the men who dare be honest in the worst of times—Fitzgerald and Grattan, the men of the people;" the Barber-surgeons, "responsibility-bill;" the Carpenters, "independence supported with virtue—Fitzgerald and Grattan;" the Chandlers, "light to the cause of independence, and obscurity to the Police institution;" the Weavers, "no bounties, but protecting duties to the manufactures of Ireland—no unconstitutional police;" the Cutlers, "the assertors of liberty—Fitzgerald and Grattan, the men of the people—freedom to those who dare contend for it;" the Hosiers, "real, not sham hosiers, who, by long perseverance, freed the corporation from corruption—shame and confusion ever attend the attempts to divide the free sons of Hibernia;" the Joiners, "independent—we despise corruption and the corrupted."

The slaves of the enslaved were now soliciting, by their acknowledged organ, the Catholic committee, a further diminution of their shackles. This committee consisted of lords and gentlemen of rank and fortune, who sate in their own right, and delegates from towns and cities. Addresses of congratulation and loyalty to every viceroy, humble applications to his secretary, and occasionally to parliament, for relief, hitherto limited their exertions. But, at the close of this year, they were emboldened, by the growing liberality of the times, to prepare a petition, praying that the situation of the catholics might be taken into consideration. They waited on the secretary, major Hobart, intreating the countenance of govern-

ment; it was denied: they then determined to apply to parliament, but not a member could be induced to present it.

The hostility of the government to further concession, was strongly marked by earl Westmoreland, in his southern tour. On his arrival in Cork, the catholics were acquainted, that an expression of their loyalty would be acceptable. An address was accordingly prepared. It concluded with a hope, that the penal code would be relaxed. But, submitted to his excellency before its formal protestation, hope, the last refuge of the wretched, was denied to the catholic! It was returned, that the clause expressive of hope should be expunged. This they refused, and no address was presented.

The session of 1791 exhibits the same measures brought forward, supported with renovated vigour, and uniformly rejected by large majorities; such is the ascendancy of a bribe over truth, justice, patriotism and eloquence.

The catholic committee continued its exertions. It met in February, and resolved that application should be immediately made, and continued, in the most submissive and constitutional manner, for a mitigation of the restrictions and disqualifications under which the catholics laboured. Twelve gentlemen were appointed to carry this into effect. They disagreed. The committee again met. Lord Kenmare, who never attended, sent his disapproval of their proceedings, and his determination not to co-operate. Lord Fingal, then in the chair, coincided with his lordship. The

committee, however, adhered to their resolutions. In April, the sub-committee reported, in substance, that they had been constantly thwarted by lord Kenmare; that the members of administration had approved of the loyal and constitutional steps they had adopted; and, that yielding to the recommendations of the friends of the catholics, they had postponed the intended application.

The catholics soon after appear to have perceived, that benefits were not in the gift of an Irish executive, an Irish parliament; that they were to be considered mere machines, impelled by the British minister; for we find Mr. Keogh delegated to the cabinet of St. James's. This discovery was rewarded, after three months solicitation, with the information, that catholics would no longer be excluded from the profession of the law, the duties of grand jurors, and that their restoration to the elective franchise would be taken into consideration.

These concessions, however, are not solely to be attributed to the rendering the subserviency of the Irish parliament manifest. The torrent of irreligion, bearing on the church of France, produced something of a counter-current in the rival nation, exciting, if not respect, at least, pity for the victims. The persecuted clergy were received with more than professions of hospitality, and supported by contributions. Sometime after an alliance was made with the pope, and English troops were sent to guard his holiness. An English secretary, in the Irish commons, lamented the decay of papal power; and Edmond Burke

employed his lately-acquired interest with the English ministry, together with all his credit and eloquence, in their behalf. The period was, in all these respects, favourable to catholic claims. The political world was in motion. The Whigs of the Capital prepared to circulate the Rights of Man; the newspapers devoted their columns to it; and the following design of a political society was circulated in Dublin.

“IDEM SENTIRE, DICERE, AGERE.

“It is proposed that at this conjuncture a SOCIETY shall be instituted in this City, having much of the secrecy, and somewhat of the ceremonial attached to Free-masonry—with so much secrecy as may communicate curiosity, uncertainty and expectation to the minds of surrounding Men;—with so much impressive and affecting ceremony in all its internal economy, as without impeding real business, may strike the soul through the senses, and addressing the *whole* Man, may animate his philosophy by the energy of his passions.

“Secrecy is expedient and necessary; it will make the bond of union more cohesive, and the spirit of this union more ardent and more condensed; it will envelope this dense flame with a cloud of gloomy ambiguity, that will not only facilitate its own agency, but will, at the same time, confound and terrify its enemies by their ignorance of the design, the extent, the direction, or the consequences. It will throw a veil over those individuals, whose professional prudence might make them wish to lie concealed, until a manifestation of themselves becomes absolutely necessary. And lastly, secrecy is necessary, because it is by no means certain that a country so great a stranger to itself as Ireland, where the North and the South, and the East and the West, meet to wonder at each other, is yet *prepared* for the adoption of one profession of Political Faith, while there may be individuals from each of these quarters ready to adopt such a profession, and to propagate it with their best abilities, when necessary—with their Blood.

“Our Provinces are perfectly ignorant of each other;—our Island is connected; we ourselves are insulated; and the

distinctions of rank, of property, and of religious persuasion, have hitherto been not merely lines of difference, but brazen walls of separation. We are separate nations met and settled together, not mingled, but *convened*; an incoherent mass of dissimilar materials, uncemented, unconsolidated, like the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw with a head of fine gold, legs of iron, and feet of clay, parts that do not cleave to one another.

“In the midst of an island, where manhood has met and continues to meet with such severe humiliation, where selfish men, or classes of men, have formed such malignant conspiracy against Public Good, let one benevolent, beneficent Conspiracy arise, one Plot of Patriots pledged by solemn adjuration to each other in the service of the People—the PEOPLE, in the largest sense of that momentous word. Let the cement of this Constitutional Compact be a principle of such strong attraction, as completely to overpower all accidental and temporary repulsions that take place between real Irishmen, and thus to consolidate the scattered and shifting sand of Society into an adhesive and immoveable Caisson, sunk beneath the dark and troubled waters. It is by wandering from the few plain and simple principles of Political Faith, that our Politics, like our Religion, has become Preaching, not Practice, Words, not Works.

“A Society, such as this, will disclaim those party appellations which seem to pale the human heart into petty compartments, and parcel out into Sects and Sections, Common Sense, Common Honesty, and Common Weal. As little will it affect any speculative, unimpassioned, quiescent benevolence. It will not call itself a Whig Club, or a Revolution Society. It will not ground itself on a name indicative of a party, or an event well enough in the circumstances and in the season. It will not be an Aristocracy affecting the language of Patriotism, the rival of Despotism, for its own sake, not its irreconcilable enemy, for the sake of *us all*.

“It will not, by views merely retrospective, stop the march of mankind, or force them back into the lanes and alleys of their ancestors. It will have an eye provident and prospective, a reach and amplitude of conception commensurate to the progressive diffusion of knowledge, and at the same time a promptitude in execution requisite in a life like

this, so short and so fragile, in a nation like this, so passive and so procrastinating. Let its name be the IRISH BROTHERHOOD. Let its general aim be, to make the light of philanthropy, a pale and ineffectual light, *converge*, and, by converging, kindle into ardent, energetic, enthusiastic love for Ireland: that genuine, unadulterated enthusiasm, which descends from a luminous head to a burning heart, and impels the spirit of man to exertions greatly good, or unequivocally great. For this Society is not to rest satisfied in drawing speculative plans of reform and improvement, but to be practically busied about the *means* of accomplishment. Were the hand of Locke to hold from Heaven a scheme of government most perfectly adapted to the nature and capabilities of the Irish Nation, it would drop to the ground a mere sounding scroll, were there no other means of giving it effect than its intrinsic excellence. All true Irishman agree in *what* ought to be done, but how to get it done, is the question.—This Society is likely to be a means the most powerful for the promotion of a great end—what END?

“THE RIGHTS OF MEN IN IRELAND, the greatest happiness of the greatest number in *this Island*, the inherent and indefeasible claims of every free nation, to rest in this nation—the *will* and the *power* to be happy—to pursue the Common Weal as an individual pursues his private welfare, and to stand in insulated independence, an imperatorial People.—To gain a knowledge of the real state of this heterogeneous country, to form a summary of the national will and pleasure in points most interesting to national happiness, and when such a summary is formed, to put this *Doctrine* as speedily as may be into *Practice*, will be the purpose of this central society, or lodge, from which other lodges in the different towns will radiate.

“THE GREATEST HAPPINESS OF THE GREATEST NUMBER—On the rock of this principle let this Society rest; by this let it judge and determine every political question, and whatever is necessary for this end, let it not be accounted hazardous, but rather our interest, our duty, our glory, and our common religion. The rights of Men are the rights of God, and to vindicate the one is to maintain the other. We must be free, in order to serve Him, whose service is perfect freedom.

“Let every Member wear, day and night, an Amulet

round his neck, containing the great principle which unites the Brotherhood, in letters of gold, on a ribbon, striped with all the original colours, and inclosed in a sheath of white silk, to represent the pure union of the mingled rays, and the abolition of all superficial distinctions, all colours and shades of difference, for the sake of one illustrious end. Let this Amulet of union, faith and honour, depend from the neck, and be bound about the body next to the skin and close to the heart.

“ This is enthusiasm.—It is so; and who that has a spark of Hibernicism in his nature, would not feel it kindle into a flame of generous enthusiasm? Who, that has a drop of sympathy in his heart, when he looks around him, and sees how happiness is heaped up in mounds, and how misery is diffused and divided among the million, does not exclaim, Alas! for the suffering, and Oh! for the power to redress it? And who is there that has enthusiasm sufficient to make an exclamation, would not combine with others as honest as himself to make the will live in the act, and to swear,—WE WILL REDRESS IT—Who is there? Who?

“ The first business of the Brotherhood will be to form a transcript, or digest, of the doctrine which they mean to subscribe, to uphold, to propagate, and reduce to practice. It is time for Ireland to look her fortune in the face, not with turbulent ostentation, but with fixed resolution to live and die Freemen. Let then those questions be agitated and answered fully and fairly, which have been wilfully concealed from us by interested persons and parties, and which appear terrible only by being kept in the dark. Always armed with this principle, that it is the duty of the people to establish their rights, this Society will carry it along with them in their course, as the Sybil did the branch of gold, to avert or to disperse every vain fear and every unreal terror.

“ What are the *means* of procuring such a reform in the constitution as may secure to the People their rights most effectually and most speedily?

“ What is the plan of reform most suited to this country?

“ Can the ~~re~~novation in the constitution, which we all deem necessary, be accomplished by the *ways* of the constitution? ‘ The evil,’ says Junius, ‘ lies too deep to be cured by any remedy less than some great convulsion which may

bring back the constitution to its original principles, or utterly destroy it.' Is this opinion still truer when applied to *this* country? or is it false?

“ Who are the People?

“ Can the right of changing the constitution rest any where but in the original constitute power—the People?

“ Can the will of the People be known but by full and fair convention, to be constituted on the plan which will come recommended on the most popular authority?

“ What are the rights of Roman Catholics, and what are the immediate duties of Protestants respecting these rights?

“ Are the Roman Catholics generally or partially *capaces Libertatis*? and if not, What are the speediest means of making them so?

“ Is the independence of Ireland nominal or real, a barren right, or a fact regulative of national conduct, and influencing national character?

“ Has it had any other effect than raising the value of a house, and making it more self-sufficient, at the expence of the People?

“ Is there any middle state between the extremes of union with Britain and total separation, in which the rights of the People can be fully established and rest in security?

“ What is the form of government that will secure to us our rights with the least expence and the greatest benefit?

“ By the BROTHERHOOD are these questions, and such as these, to be determined. On this determination are they to form the chart of their constitution, which with honour and good faith they are to subscribe, and which is to regulate their course.—Let the Society at large meet four times in the year, and an acting Committee once a month, to which all members shall be invited. Let these meetings be *convivial*, but not the transitory patriotism of deep potation; *confidential*, the heart open, and the door locked; *conversational*, not a debating society. There is too much haranguing in this country already: a very great redundance of sound. Would that we spoke a little more laconically, and acted a little more emphatically; and we shall do so, when our aim is at something nobler and fairer than even the sublime and beautiful of Mr. Burke;—the sublimity of Common Sense—the beauty of Common Weal.

Our Society should at first be very chaste and cautious in the selection of Members, shunning equally the giddiness of the boy, and that sullen indifference about the public good, which comes on with decline of years, looking around for those who are competent, and with respect to themselves content, yet zealous and persevering; not venal, not voracious, not confined in their manners and their morality to the pale of a profession; not idle philanthropists, who fidget round the globe with their favourite adage; not those who are bound down by obedience to that wizard word, *Empire*, to the sovereignty of two sounding syllables; but honest, honourable *Irishmen*, of whatever rank, of whatever religion, who know Liberty, who love it, who wish to have it, and who will have it. Members should be admitted only by an unanimous ballot, and perhaps once a year there should be a general re-election.

“The *external* business of this Society will be, 1st, Publication, in order to propagate their principles and effectuate their ends. All papers for this purpose to be sanctioned by the Committee, and published with no other designation of character than—ONE OF THE BROTHERHOOD.—2dly, Communication with the different towns to be assiduously kept up, and every exertion used to accomplish a *National Convention* of the People of Ireland, who may profit by past errors, and by many unexpected circumstances which have happened since the last Meeting.—3dly, Communication with similar Societies abroad, as the Jacobin Club in Paris, the Revolution Society in England, the Committee for Reform in Scotland. Let the nations go abreast. Let the interchange of sentiment among mankind concerning the Rights of Man be as immediate as possible. A Correspondence with distinguished men in Britain, or on the Continent, will be necessary to enlighten us, and ought to be cherished. Eulogies on such men as have deserved well of their country *until death*, should be, from time to time, delivered by one of the Brotherhood, their works should live in a Library to be formed by this Society, and dedicated to Liberty, and the Portraits of such men should adorn it. Let the shades of the mighty dead look down and consecrate our Meetings. The Athenians were accustomed to fasten their edicts to the statues of their ancestors.—Let our Laws and Liberties have

a similar attachment, taking heed always to remember what has been always too much forgotten—that *We* are to be ancestors ourselves; and as our bodies moulder down after sepulture, merely to pass into new forms of life, let our spirits preserve a principle of animation to posterity, and germinate from the very grave.

“What is the time most applicable for the establishment of this institution? Even NOW. “*Le grand art est dans l’apropos.*” Why is administration so imperious? Because the Nation does not act. The Whig Club is not a transfusion from the People. We do not thoroughly *understand* that Club, and they do not *feel* for us. When the Aristocracy come forward, the People fall backward; when the People come forward, the Aristocracy, fearful of being left behind, insinuate themselves into our ranks, and rise into timid leaders, or treacherous auxiliaries. They mean to make us their instruments. Let us rather make them *our* instruments. One of the two must happen. The People must serve the purposes of Party, or the Party must emerge in the mightiness of the People, and Hercules will then lean upon his club.

“On the 14th of July, the day which shall ever commemorate the French Revolution, let this Society pour out their first libation to European Liberty, eventually the Liberty of the World, and with their hands joined in each other, and their eyes raised to Heaven, in his presence who breathed into them an ever-living soul, let them swear to maintain the rights and prerogatives of their nature as men, and the right and prerogative of Ireland as an independent People. “*Dieu et mon Droit!*” is the motto of kings. “*Dieu et la Liberte!*” exclaimed Voltaire, when he first beheld Franklin his Fellow-Citizen of the World. “*Dieu et nos Droits!*”—let Irishmen cry aloud to each other. The cry of Mercy—of Justice—and of Victory. June, 1791.”

A feu-de-joye in Stephen’s-green, by the remnants of the Volunteer corps, commanded by Napper Tandy, a partial illumination, and a few public dinners, feebly commemorated the French revolution. Not so in Belfast. There the volunteer corps, infantry, cavalry and artillery, the

Northern Whig Club, and the principal inhabitants, convened by public notice, paraded the streets, displaying emblematical figures: one represented Hibernia reclining, a hand and foot in shackles, and a volunteer presenting to her a figure of liberty, supported by an artillery-man resting on a piece of ordnance, with the motto, “ For a people to be free, it is sufficient that they will it.” They drew up at the White Linen-hall, fired three feu-de-joie, formed a circle, adopted, and announced with cheers, the following Declaration, to be transmitted to the National Assembly.

“ Declaration of the Volunteers and Inhabitants at large of the town and neighbourhood of Belfast, on the subject of the French Revolution, unanimously agreed to at an assembly held by public notice, on the 14th of July, 1791. Colonel Sharman, president.

“ Neither on marble, nor on brass, can the Rights and Duties of Men be so durably registered as on their memories and on their hearts. We, therefore, meet this day to commemorate the French Revolution, that the remembrance of this great event may sink deeply into our hearts; warmed, not merely with the fellow feeling of townsmen, but with a sympathy which binds us to the human race in a brotherhood of interest, of duty, and of affection.

“ A Revolution of such moment to mankind, involving so many millions, embracing so great a country, and completed in so short a time, is apt to confound and perplex by the magnitude of the object, and the rapidity of its motion. We, therefore, think it best to attach our minds upon one simple sublime Truth, where our opinions may centre, and our judgments find stability. We are men of plain, and, we hope, sound understanding.—We will disentangle ourselves from those bewitching bonds, with which an enticing and meretricious eloquence has, of late, vainly endeavoured to tie down the freedom and the strength of manhood; and neither so-

phisticated by genius, nor rendered miserable by refinement and mystery, we will think and declare our thoughts, not as Politicians, but as *Men*, as *Citizens*, and as *Volunteers*.

As *Men*, therefore, we think, that Government is a Trust for the use of the People—the PEOPLE, in the largest sense of that misapprehended word.—We think that the Public Weal is the end of Government, and that the forms of Government are merely the mutable means for obtaining this end; means that may be modelled or changed by the real Will of the Public; a Will supreme paramount to all other authority.

“As *Citizens*, we think that no people can promise unconditional obedience; and that obedience itself ceases to be a duty when the Will of the People ceases to be the Law of the Land.

“As *Volunteers*, we think that the force of the people should form the guarantee of Freedom, and that their Freedom is the only sure guarantee of public happiness.

“Here, then, we take our stand; and if we be asked what is the French Revolution to us? We answer MUCH.

“1. Much as MEN. It is good for human nature, that the grass grows where the Bastile stood. We do rejoice at an event, which seemed the breaking of a charm, that held *universal* France in a Bastile of civil and religious bondage. When we behold this mishapen pile of abuses, cemented merely by custom, and raised upon the ignorance of a prostrate people, tottering to its base—to the very level of equal liberty and common-wealth, we do really rejoice at this resurrection of human nature; and we congratulate our Brother, MAN, coming forth from the vaults of ingenious torture, and from the cave of death. We do congratulate the Christian world, that there is in it, one great nation, which has renounced all ideas of conquest, and has published the first glorious manifesto of humanity, of union and of peace. In return we pray to God, that peace may rest in their land; and that it may never be in the power of royalty, nobility, or a priesthood, to disturb the harmony of a good people, consulting about those laws which must ensure their own happiness, and that of unborn millions.—The French Revolution is therefore much to us,

“2. AS IRISHMEN. We too have a country, and we hold it very dear—so dear to its *Interest*, that we wish ALL CIVIL

AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE annihilated in this land—so dear to us, its *Honour*, that we wish an eternal stop to the traffic of public liberty, which is bought by one, and sold to another—so dear to us, its *Freedom*, that we wish for nothing so much as a REAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL WILL, the surest guide and guardian of national happiness.

Go on then—great and gallant People!—to practise the sublime philosophy of your legislation; to force applause from nations least disposed to do you justice, and not by conquest, but by the omnipotence of reason, to convert and liberate the WORLD—a World, whose eyes are fixed on you; whose heart is with you, who talks of you with all her tongues. You are, in very truth, the HOPE of this World; of all except a few men in a few cabinets, who thought the human race belonged to them, not they to the human race; but now are taught by awful example, and tremble; and dare confide in armies arrayed against you and your cause.”

To this the ensuing answers appeared in the public papers, in the month of September.

“The Society of the Friends of the Constitution at Bourdeaux, to the Volunteers and Inhabitants of the Town and Environs of Belfast, in Ireland.

“Friends and Brethren! Yes, generous Irishmen!—receive this appellation, which we have hitherto granted, *exclusively*, to Frenchmen, true friends to our Constitution.—Receive it, notwithstanding the distance which separates us; the difference of our idioms, and of our manners. Men inspired by a love of the human kind, and the spirit of liberty, are mutually attracted, however distant their situations;—there is nothing intermediate between them, were they placed at different extremities of the globe.—The Citizens who agreed to the Declaration concluded on at Belfast, on the 14th July, 1791, are then, *all*, our *Brothers*, and our *Friends*.

“Your Address, read the 12th of this month, at one of the public sittings of our Society, and frequently interrupted by universal bursts of applause, has filled our souls with sentiments of delight; in contemplating the purity, the compass, and the energy of your maxims, respecting the natural and

political Rights of Man.—We fancied we beheld the Standard of Liberty, which philosophy at this day unfurls in every part of Europe, arrested in its progress on the rock of Ireland, to receive the new homage of an enlightened people.

“ The truth of your sentiments; the depth of your reflections; the gracefulness of your expressions, recalled to our recollection those celebrated bards, those immortal poets, whom the barbarous Edward, one of the English tyrants, pursued with his most cruel persecutions, to stifle the voice of the country, of honour, and of liberty.

“ France has given the signal of a bold insurrection against all prejudices; against all abuses; against all illegitimate authorities.—May it, as you desire, become general among the human race!—That day, Friends and Brethren—will arrive; when the different parts of the civilized world shall raise together their eloquent voice; which, like that of Belfast, shall assert the Rights of the People, and teach them to recover them by the Empire of Reason, and the power of the laws.

“ Receive, Friends and Brethren, the congratulations and thanks of a Free People, transmitted to you through us, as their organ—for the example which you yourselves lately gave to the Universe.—We congratulate you on the talents displayed in the exposition of your principles respecting the nature and the end of Government. We congratulate you on the sagacity, the noble freedom, with which you have pointed out the influence of the French Revolution on the happiness of every people. We congratulate you on the courage with which you force tyrants to listen to expressions of that lively interest which you take in our fate; to hear the prayer which you address to God, that he may protect us with his power; to attend, above all, to the ardent vows which you have offered up for our success. In fine, we congratulate you, Brethren and Friends, on the respect which you have shewn to the National Assembly of France, by addressing to it directly your Declaration. Ah! that you could conceive the degree in which that brilliant act of admiration and respect has penetrated our souls with joy and gratitude!—that you could conceive how much all good Frenchmen are touched, honoured, filled with noble pride, when they behold the just tribute of applause, which they themselves unceasingly offer

to their regenerative Assembly, passing from mouth to mouth, from clime to clime, to that Council of Sages, who thus enjoy, beforehand, the glory with which posterity will crown it.

“ We are, with the most tender affection, Friends and Brothers, The Members of the Society of the Friends of the Constitution, at Bourdeaux. Azema, President, Chapelle, Secretary. At Bourdeaux, 14th of August, 1791, in the third year of our liberty.”

“ Clermont Department of Puy de Dome, 20th of August, third year of liberty, to the Volunteers of Ireland.

“ Brothers and Friends! The first principle of a virtuous Frenchman is that which attaches him to the destinies of his country. Its deserved recompence is the good opinion of those free men with whom humanity has stamped our cause as the cause of equality, the cause of liberty.

“ The sentiments manifested by the brave Irish Volunteers, strengthens the opinion we had already formed of the energy of that unsubdued Nation, which for three centuries successfully resisted the usurped dominion of the English Government.

“ People of Ireland, rejoice; your sufferings are nearly terminated. The torch of reason is lighted; it beams upon the whole world; one of its first rays has darted upon your island. The Irish Volunteers, glowing with the holy love of liberty, will receive and disperse it to the remotest parts of your nation, and they will preserve it with that courage which the cause requires, and your nation is famed for.

“ That veil is torn, which has for ages hid the sacred rights of the people; the chains of Europe are shattered; the last moment of despotism is at hand; let us hasten the fall of the insatiable monster; let us unite as friends, as brothers, in heart and deeds; let us wrest from our tyrants, even to the last of those powers which they have assumed; let us leave with them all that of right belongs to them, the shame, the ignominy of having usurped them; let us leave with their vile abettors those chains rivetted to their base souls by sordid interest.

“ For the accomplishment of this most salutary work, let our fortunes, let our lives be sacrificed; let us vow a reciprocal friendship and union, under the revered and indissoluble seal, the good of human kind.

“ In the certainty that our sentiments will be approved by the Irish Volunteers, as theirs are cherished by those free-men, who compose the Society of the Friends of the Constitution in Clermont, we present them our thanks, and request their association and correspondence.

“ The Members of the Committee of Correspondence, for the Friends of the Constitution in Clermont, Mouestier, President, Francois Biozat, Mabru, Secretaries.”

The formation of political societies, on the principles of the preceding prospectus, now proceeded rapidly. One was formed in Belfast, in October; another in Dublin, in November; and shortly after many others throughout the North, all under the denomination of United Irishmen. According to their constitution, the members were admitted by ballot; each member, previous to his election, was to take and subscribe the test at the close of their Declaration, page 315. A president, treasurer and secretary, committees of constitution, finance, correspondence, and of accommodation were appointed quarterly, for conducting the business of the society; and, to defray its expenses, and establish a fund, one guinea on admission, and one guinea annually, was to be paid by each member. On the 9th of December, 1792, this Society published the following Declaration.

“ In the present great æra of reform, when unjust governments are falling in every quarter of Europe, when religious persecution is compelled to abjure her tyranny over conscience, when the rights of men are ascertained in theory, and that theory substantiated by practice, when antiquity can no longer defend absurd and oppressive forms against the common sense and common interests of mankind, when all government is acknowledged to originate from the people,

and to be so far only obligatory as it protects their rights and promotes their welfare; we think it our duty, as Irishmen, to come forward and state what we feel to be our heavy grievance, and what we know to be its effectual remedy.

“ We have no National Government.

“ We are ruled by Englishmen, and the servants of Englishmen, whose object is the interest of another country, whose instrument is corruption, whose strength is the weakness of Ireland, and these men have the whole of the power and patronage of the country as means to seduce and subdue the honesty and the spirit of her representatives in the legislature. Such an extrinsic power, acting with uniform force in a direction too frequently opposite to the true line of our obvious interests, can be resisted with effect solely by unanimity, decision and spirit in the people, qualities which may be exerted most legally, constitutionally and efficaciously, by that great measure essential to the prosperity and freedom of Ireland—An equal Representation of all the People in Parliament.

“ We do not here mention as grievances, the rejection of a place bill, of a pension bill, of a responsibility bill, the sale of peerages in one house, the corruption publicly avowed in the other, nor the notorious infamy of borough traffic between both; not that we are insensible of their enormity, but that we consider them as but symptoms of that mortal disease which corrodes the vitals of our constitution, and leaves to the people in their own government the shadow of a name.

“ Impressed with these sentiments, we have agreed to form an association, to be called The Society of United Irishmen; and we do pledge ourselves to our country, and mutually to each other, that we will steadily support and endeavour by all due means to carry into effect the following resolutions:

“ 1. Resolved, that the weight of English influence in the Government of this country is so great as to require a cordial union among All the People of Ireland, to maintain that balance which is essential to the preservation of our liberties and the extension of our commerce.

“ 2. That the sole constitutional mode by which this influence can be opposed is by a complete and radical reform of the representation of the people in parliament.

“ 3. That no reform is practicable, efficacious or just, which shall not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion.

“Satisfied as we are that the intestine divisions among Irishmen have too often given encouragement and impunity to audacious and corrupt administrations in measures which but for these divisions they durst not have attempted, we submit our resolutions to the nation as the basis of our political faith.

“We have gone to what we conceive to be the root of the evil; we have stated what we conceive to be the remedy: with a parliament thus reformed every thing is easy; without it nothing can be done; and we do call on and most earnestly exhort our countrymen in general to follow our example, and form similar societies in every quarter of the kingdom for the promotion of constitutional knowledge, the abolition of bigotry in religion and politics, and the equal distribution of the Rights of Man throughout all sects and denominations of Irishmen.

“The people, when thus collected, will feel their own weight, and secure that power which theory has already admitted as their portion, and to which, if they be not aroused by their present provocations to vindicate it, they deserve to forfeit their pretensions for ever.

“James Napper Tandy, Secretary.

“TEST.—I, A. B. in the presence of God, do pledge myself to my country that I will use all my abilities and influence in the attainment of an impartial and adequate representation of the Irish nation in parliament; and as a means of absolute and immediate necessity in the establishment of this chief good of Ireland, I will endeavour as much as lies in my ability to forward a brotherhood of affection, an identity of interests, a communion of rights and an union of power among Irishmen of all religious persuasions, without which every reform in parliament must be partial, not national, inadequate to the wants, delusive to the wishes, and insufficient for the freedom and happiness of this country.”

At this period a division took place between the catholics. Their nobles and several of their gentry, endeavoured to induce the committee to adopt the resolution of seeking no removal of the existing tyrannic penal laws, but in the manner

and extent the legislature should deem expedient. This was resisted, as a real abandonment of their object, and negatived by ninety to seventeen. These negatived resolutions, the minority embodied into an address to the lord-lieutenant, and, with fifty-seven additional signatures, presented it on the 27th of December. The general committee published counter resolutions, severely censuring the sixty-eight addressers. These proceedings gave birth to the discussion of politics by the Irish catholics in a distinct capacity.

Meanwhile the session commenced. Mr. Grattan's speech on the address is deserving of perusal, bringing into a focus the most important transactions that occurred since the Volunteer era; incontrovertibly establishing the grievances of which the nation complained, and the United Irishmen embodied to redress. "It is now ten years (said he) since you recovered your constitution, and three since, in the opinion of some, you have lost it. Your present ministers made two attempts on your liberties; the first failed, and the second has succeeded—you remember the first—you remember the Propositions.... The second attempt was modelling of the parliament. In 1789, fifteen new salaries, with several new pensions to the members thereof, were created at once, and added to the old overgrown parliamentary influence of the crown—in other words, the expenditure of the interest of half a million to buy the house of Commons—the sale of the peerage, and the purchase of seats in the Commons—the formation of a stock-purse by the minister,

to monopolize boroughs, and buy up representation. This new practice, whereby the minister of the crown becomes the common borough broker of the kingdom, constitutes an offence so multitudinous, and in all its parts so criminal, as to call for radical reformation, and exemplary punishment. Whether the persons concerned be lord Buckingham or his secretary, or those who became the objects of his promotion, because they had been the ministers of his vices,—it was a conspiracy against the fundamental laws of the land, and sought to establish, and has established, in the place of a limited monarchy, a corrupt despotism; and if any thing rescues the persons so concerned from the name of traitors, it is not the principles of law, but its omission, that has not described by any express provisional statute, that patricide, of which these men, in intention and substance, are guilty. They have adopted a practice, which decides the fate of our parliamentary constitution. In vain shall we boast of its blessings, and of its three estates, the King, the Lords, and the Commons, when the King sells one estate to buy the other, and so contaminates both. The minister has sent one set of men packing into the Peers, and another set of men packing into the Commons; and the first he calls the hereditary council, and the latter, the grand council of the nation, and both, that once great and august institution—the parliament. Such a condition, I say, puts the constitution of Ireland not below a republic, but any other form of genuine and healthy government—it is not mixed monarchy,

with parts happily tempered, and so forth—the cant of grave and superannuated addresses; but a rank, and vile, and simple, and absolute government, rendered so by means that make every part of it vicious and abominable—the executive who devours the whole, and the other two parts which are thus extinguished; of such a constitution, the component parts are debauched by one another. The monarch is made to prostitute the prerogative of honour by the sale of honours—the Lords by the purchase; and the Commons prostitute their nature by being the offspring not of the people, but of a traffic, and prostitute themselves again by the sale of their votes and persons.... By this trade of parliament the king is absolute—his will is signified by both houses of parliament, who are now as much an instrument in his hand as a bayonet in the hands of a regiment. Like a regiment, we have our adjutant, who sends to the infirmary for the old, and to the brothel for the young, and men thus carted as it were into this house, to vote for the minister, are called the Representatives of the people.... See its effects.”—After enumerating them, he concludes: “Sir, whenever freedom shall be properly understood, depend upon it, the gentlemen of this country will be ashamed of the condition they bear, and the questions they have made upon it—in the mean time I can account for their patience—the Irish are accustomed to be trodden upon—uniformly, says Junius, has Ireland been plundered and oppressed. It is not so in England: defective in some particulars as the constitution

of England may still be, yet with all those defects England has a constitution, and she has also maxims, as well as laws, to preserve it. They have not been blessed in England with a succession of lord lieutenants, secretaries, whose sole occupation has been to debauch the political morality of the gentlemen of the island. No minister will venture to tell the gentlemen of England, that they must be bought: no man will venture to say, that the best minister is he who buys parliament the cheapest.....The people of this country suppose, that England acceded to their liberties, and they were right; but the present ministry have sent the curse after that blessing—hear the curse! “ You have got rid of the British parliament, but we will buy the Irish—you have shaken off our final judicature; but we will sell yours—you have got your free trade, but we will make your own parliament suffer our monopolists in one quarter of the globe to exclude you; and you shall remain content with the right, destitute of the possession. Your corporate rights shall be attacked, and you shall not stir: the freedom of your press, and the personal freedom of the subject, shall be outraged, and you shall not arraign: your city shall be put under contribution to corrupt its magistracy, and pay a guard to neglect and insult her: the seats of justice shall be purchased by personal servitude, and the qualification of your judges shall be, to have borne their suffrage and testimony against the people. Taxes shall be drawn from the poor, by various artifices, to buy the rich: your bills, like your

people shall be sold; you shall see the genius of your country neglected; her patriotism dismissed from commission, and the old enemies of your constitution made the rulers of the realm."

The extent of the relief to be granted to the catholics, their early friend, and the uniform supporter of government, Sir Hercules Langrishe, set forth in the following resolutions. "1. He would give them the practice and profession of the law, as a reasonable provision, and application of their talents to their own country. 2. He would restore to them education, entire and unrestrained, because a state of ignorance was a state of barbarity. 3. He would draw closer the bonds of intercourse and affection, by allowing intermarriage, repealing that cruel statute that served to betray female credulity, and bastardize the children of a virtuous mother. 4. He would remove those obstructions to arts and manufactures, that limited the number of apprentices, which were so necessary to assist and promote trade." The catholic committee, in addition to these concessions, petitioned for the elective franchise; the Dissenters of Belfast petitioned that the catholics should be placed on an equal footing with their protestant fellow subjects: these petitions were rejected: the bill passed. The limits of this work not allowing room for more of the debates than what set forth historical matter with force of argument, the following extract, from the concise and elegant speech of Mr. Smyth, on the catholic question, will not displease. "From the line of my profession I have, upon several

occasions, been forced into an intimate consideration of that code of laws, distinguished by the name of popery laws; by which means I became enabled to form, and am, I think, now not altogether incompetent to deliver, a tolerably adequate opinion of their nature and their character. Sir, I never read them but with horror, nor reflected upon them but with a mingled sensation of sorrow and of shame. I hailed the relaxation of them as the auspicious dawn, and I looked, and do look, to their utter and final abrogation, as to the meridian glory of my country's welfare and prosperity.

“ Impressed with these sentiments, I could not but rejoice when the honorable baronet, who first moved this bill, introduced it into the house; and I instantly determined, if necessary, to give it my feeble, though best support; while at the same time I fondly hoped, that being, as I deemed it, in its nature highly expedient, in its concessions extremely moderate, and in its consequences likely to be eminently salutary, it would not only escape every thing like angry opposition, but pass into a law in all the dignity of unanimous and universal approbation.

“ The objects which this bill embraces are but few: it proposes to admit our Roman catholic brethren into the profession and practice of the law, in all its various departments; to enable them, also, to establish literary seminaries and academies, for the instruction and education of their own youth; and to permit intermarriages of Protestants and Roman Catholics, with some sub-

ordinate provisions, on which I mean not at present to trouble the house with my observations. As to the first and second of these measures, justice and humanity, as well as sound policy, forbid all resistance to them. We all know, that arts and sciences, like soils, are best improved by culture; nor is the prosperity of a nation more marked by the number and industry of its citizens, than the perfection of science is ensured by the multitude and competition of its students and votaries. Just Heaven, Sir, is the “ ample page of knowledge” to be withheld for ever from our Roman Catholic fellow citizens? As to them, are the sacred fountains of science and of truth to be for ever dried up? Is more, much more than half the genius of the land, to be condemned to pine and languish in obscurity for ever? for ever to

“ Blush unseen,

“ And waste its sweetness on the desert air?”

Or is it to be for ever banished from our hospitable shores, to seek a wretched asylum in some distant land, until happily at length impelled and elevated, by its native energy, it may serve to dignify some foreign court, or to illuminate some other hemisphere? Forbid it, Heaven! forbid it, the justice and humanity of my country! forbid it, every motive, and every principle, that ought to sway the human heart, or guide the human intellect! No, Sir, we will admit our Roman Catholic brethren into the profession of the law; we will receive them with open arms; we will enable and encourage them to qualify for that important station; we will contend and struggle

with them in the honest and honourable pursuits of fortune and of fame; and, if vanquished in the strife, we will join with the surrounding world in admiring those talents, which, though we could not equal, we dared to emulate.

“ With respect to the intermarriages of Protestants and Roman Catholics, I feel assured it is a measure, that can never meet resistance within those walls. In a country, eminently distinguished by the beauty of its women, and the gallantry of its men, shall it be adjudged criminal to admire that, from whose

“ Every step is grace,

“ And every gesture dignity and love!”

Shall it be deemed a breach of allegiance, to pay homage to beauty? Shall loyalty be set at variance with nature? Shall our gracious sovereign be forced to dispute titles with the “mighty monarch of the human heart?” And shall love, in Ireland, shall love be made little less than high-treason by law? Why, Sir, the punishment of Tantalus was mercy to this. Such horrid laws find their remedy in their impotence; their cruelty defeats and destroys their effect, and they become inoperative, because they are unnatural. Where God and nature enjoin admiration and esteem, it is vain, as well as sinful, in law, to prohibit union. The instinctive passions of the human heart will force their way, in spite of every cruel effort to check or to subdue them; and when indulged, when virtuously and honourably indulged, gracious Heaven, shall all their holy joys, shall all their sacred and mysterious raptures, be, by a merciless

law, converted into pains and penalties? Shall the nuptial torch serve only to light its unoffending, yet unhappy votaries, to their temporal undoing? And shall the doating husband be forced to contemplate, in the person of his lovely wife, the fatal drag cast upon his honest ambition; the beauteous, innocent, pitiable burthen, that is to weigh him down in life, and mar his fortune and his fame for ever?

“ Away with such abominable laws! away with such savage legislation; and away, for ever away with such mischievous and such merciless policy. Let us, I conjure the house by the sacred names of charity and benevolence! let us maintain the cause, and assert the honest, virtuous claims of nature. Let us adjure all tyranny over the human heart, and vindicate and protect these amiable and irresistible attachments, which are the prime sources, not only of all domestic happiness, but also of all national strength, prosperity and glory. Let us once more throw wide the golden gates of hallowed love, and let hymeneal songs, and the sympathetic murmurs of united hearts, render “ our groves harmonious.”

“ I fear I have trespassed on the attention of the house too long, and shall therefore hasten to conclude; but before I resume my seat, let me, in the most solemn, yet in the most suppliant manner, entreat of those gentlemen, who may be apprehensive of the consequence of the present bill, that while they regard, with a steady eye, the Protestant interest, they do not overlook the Roman catholic virtue; that is, in their anxiety

to preserve what is called the Protestant ascendancy, they forget not to alleviate the Roman Catholic grievances; so that while one party shall be happy in the possession of prerogative, the other may be contented in the participation of privilege; always remembering, that kindness on the one hand will not, cannot fail of producing gratitude on the other; until, after a lengthened period of mutual harmony, cordiality and affection, that happy moment, so much, so devoutly to be wished for, by every real friend of this country, shall arrive, when the divided names of Protestant and Roman Catholic shall be heard no more, but, mellowed and melted away, shall finally lose themselves, in the more endearing, glorious and divine appellations, of friend, brother and fellow christian."

To open the trade to India, from which Ireland was debarred by the revenue laws, Mr. Ponsonby moved for leave to bring in a bill, to repeal every law which prohibited a trade from Ireland with every country lying eastward of the Cape of Good Hope; which was refused by a great majority, and Ireland shut out from the commerce of the East, by her own corrupt parliament. A pension-bill, place-bill, and the repeal of the police-bill, met the same fate. A bill, denominated to prevent combination, rendering the labouring classes liable to the severest penalties, passed the commons without opposition; a petition from the master-carpenters prayed its enactment in the house of lords; the journeymen assembled in the Phenix-park, proceeded thence to College-green;

and presented a petition against the bill. The bill being read through, the lord chancellor rose, and said the bill before their lordships was such a system of oppression as ought not to be tolerated a moment. He was extremely sorry to see a desire prevail in this country to establish a kind of vassalage among the lower orders of working people, that would disgrace any country in Europe. Nothing could be farther from his mind, than to say any thing, that would in the remotest degree promote combination: he was convinced, that combination had done a great deal of mischief, as well to the combinatorers themselves as to the trade of the town, which it had injured in a very great degree; but the laws already against combination were many and severe; every man, convicted of combination by due course of law, was liable to imprisonment and public whipping: the present bill went to make every man, who should have the misfortune to offend the caprice of his employer, an outcast from society; for he had it in his power to refuse granting a certificate, and without that certificate no other person could employ him; he might indeed resort to a magistrate, but if the magistrate, on hearing the employer and the journeyman, should think proper to agree with the employer, the other had no appeal. That clause of the bill, which enacts, that if an apprentice shall run away from his master, a justice of the peace, on the simple affidavit of the master, shall commit the boy, send him to bridewell, and sentence him to be publicly whipped, his lordship warmly reprobated.

The bill he said, should have been entitled a bill for the encouragement of highway robbery and emigration, instead of a bill to prevent combination; for the immediate effect of making men outcasts of society, and depriving them of the means of procuring support by labour, must be, that they will become depredators on the subject. A bill of this tendency he hoped their lordships would not hesitate instantly to reject: he therefore moved that the chairman should leave the chair. It was carried without a division. On the termination of the session, the lord lieutenant expressed his Majesty's approbation of the wisdom that guided their proceedings, especially in the liberal indulgences to the Roman Catholics. In the speaker's address on presenting the money bills, the necessity of a protestant parliament and protestant ascendancy, is stated; thus making religion instrumental to political faction, a tool for strife and sedition, which led in some years to Irish descendancy.

The catholic body were eminently distinguished by activity and energy, at this period. To remove the prejudices of their Protestant brethren, engendered by scandalous and calumnious misrepresentations of catholic doctrine and principles, the Catholic committee, on the 17th of March, published the following declaration; accompanied by the answers of the foreign universities to the questions proposed by Mr. Pitt.

Whereas certain opinions and principles, inimical to good order and government, have been attributed to the Catholics, the existence of which we utterly deny; and whereas it is at

this time peculiarly necessary to remove such imputations, and to give the most full and ample satisfaction to our Protestant brethren, that we hold no principle whatsoever incompatible with our duty as men or as subjects, or repugnant to liberty, whether political, civil or religious.

Now we, the Catholics of Ireland, for the removal of all such imputations, and in deference to the opinion of many respectable bodies of men, and individuals among our Protestant brethren, do hereby, in the face of our country, of all Europe, and before God, make this our deliberate and solemn declaration :

1st. We abjure, disavow, and condemn the opinion, that princes, excommunicated by the pope and council, *or by any ecclesiastical authority whatsoever*, may therefore be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any other persons. We hold such doctrine in detestation, as wicked and impious ; and we declare, that we do not believe, that either the pope, with or without a general council, or *any prelate or priest, or any ecclesiastical power whatsoever*, can absolve the subjects of this kingdom, or any of them, from their allegiance to his majesty King George the Third, who is, by authority of parliament, the lawful king of this realm.

2d. We abjure, condemn, and detest, as unchristian and impious, the principle, that it is lawful to murder, destroy, or any ways injure any person whatsoever, for or under the pretence of being heretics ; and we declare solemnly before God, that we believe that *no act, in itself unjust, immoral, or wicked, can ever be justified or excused by, or under pretence or colour, that it was done either for the good of the church, or in obedience to any ecclesiastical power whatsoever*.

3d. We further declare, that we hold it as an unchristian and impious principle, that “ no faith is to be kept with heretics.” This doctrine we detest and reprobate, not only as *contrary* to our religion, but as destructive of morality, of society, and even of common honesty ; and it is our firm belief, that an oath made to *any* person, not of the Catholic religion, is equally binding, as if it were made to any Catholic whatsoever.

4th. We have been charged with holding as an article of our belief, that the pope, with or without the authority of a general council, or that certain ecclesiastical powers can

acquit and absolve us, before God, from our oath of allegiance, or even from the just oaths and contracts entered into between man and man.

Now we do utterly renounce, abjure, and deny, that we hold or maintain any such belief, as being contrary to the peace and happiness of society, inconsistent with morality, and, above all, *repugnant to the true spirit of the Catholic Religion*.

5. We do further declare, that we do not believe that the Pope of Rome, or any other prince, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this realm.

6th. After what we have renounced, it is immaterial, in a political light, what may be our opinion or faith in other points respecting the Pope: however, for greater satisfaction we declare, that it is *not* an article of the Catholic faith, neither are we thereby required to believe or profess, "that the Pope is infallible," or that we are bound to obey any order, in its own nature immoral, though the Pope, or any other ecclesiastical power, should issue or direct such order; but, *on the contrary*, we hold, that it would be *sinful* in us to pay any respect or obedience thereto.

7th. We further declare, that we do not believe that any sin whatsoever committed by us can be forgiven at the mere will of any Pope, or of any priest, or of any person or persons whatsoever; but, that *sincere sorrow for past sins*, a firm and sincere resolution, as far as may be in our power, to restore our neighbour's property or character, if we have trespassed on, or unjustly injured either; *a firm and sincere resolution to avoid future guilt*, and to atone to God, are *previous and indispensable* requisites to establish a well-founded expectation of forgiveness; and that any person who receives absolution without these previous requisites, so far from obtaining thereby any remission of his sins, incurs the additional guilt of violating a sacrament.

8th. We do hereby solemnly disclaim, and for ever renounce all interest in, and title to all forfeited lands resulting from any rights, or supposed rights of our ancestors, or any claim, title, or interest therein; nor do we admit any title, as a foundation of right, which is *not established and acknow-*

ledged by the laws of the realm, as they now stand. We desire further, that whenever the patriotism, liberality and justice of our countrymen, shall restore to us a participation in the elective franchise, no Catholic shall be permitted to vote at any election for members to serve in parliament, until he shall previously take an oath to defend, to the utmost of his power, the arrangement of property in this country, as established by the different acts of attainder and settlement.

9th. It has been objected to us, that we wish to subvert the present church establishment, for the purpose of substituting a Catholic establishment in its stead: now we do hereby disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure any such intention; and further, if we shall be admitted into any share of the constitution, by our being restored to the right of elective franchise, we are ready, in the most solemn manner, to declare, that we will not exercise that privilege to disturb and weaken the establishment of the Protestant religion, or Protestant government in this country.

Signed by order, and on behalf of the general committee of the Catholics of Ireland, Edward Byrne, Chairman, Richard M'Cormick, Secretary.

Queries proposed to foreign Universities.

1. Has the pope, or cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the church of Rome, any civil authority, power, jurisdiction, or pre-eminence whatsoever, within the realm of England?

2. Can the pope, or cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the church of Rome, absolve or dispense with his majesty's subjects, from their oath of allegiance, upon any pretext whatsoever?

3. Is there any principle in the tenets of the Catholic faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with heretics, or other persons differing from them in religious opinions, in any transaction, either of a public or a private nature?

Answers to the above Queries.

From the Sacred Faculty of Divinity at Paris.—The first

query they answer by declaring: neither the pope, nor the cardinals, nor any body of men, nor any other person of the church of Rome, hath any civil authority, civil power, civil jurisdiction, or civil pre-eminence whatsoever, in *any* kingdom; and, consequently, none in the kingdom of England, by reason or virtue of any authority, power, jurisdiction, or pre-eminence by divine institution inherent in, or granted, or by any other means belonging to the pope, or the church of Rome. This doctrine the Sacred Faculty of Divinity of Paris has always held, and upon every occasion maintained, and upon every occasion has rigidly proscribed the contrary doctrines from her schools.

Answer to the second query.—Neither the pope, nor the cardinals, nor any body of men, nor any person of the church of Rome, can, by virtue of the keys, absolve or release the subjects of the King of England from their oath of allegiance.

This and the first query are so intimately connected, that the answer of the first immediately and naturally applies to the second, &c.

Answer to the third query.—There is no tenet in the Catholic church, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with Heretics, or those who differ from them in matters of religion. The tenet, that it is lawful to break faith with Heretics, is so repugnant to common honesty, and the opinions of Catholics, that there is nothing of which those who have defended the Catholic faith against Protestants, have complained more heavily, than the malice and calumny of their adversaries in imputing this tenet to them, &c.

Given at Paris in the General Assembly of the Sorbonne, held on Thursday the 11th day before the calends of March 1789. Signed in due form.

University of Douay.—To the first and second queries the Sacred Faculty answers—That no power whatsoever, in civil or temporal concerns, was given by the Almighty, either to the pope, the cardinals, or the church herself, and, consequently, that kings and sovereigns are not, in temporal concerns, subject, by the ordination of God, to any ecclesiastical power whatsoever; neither can their subjects, by any authority granted to the Pope or the Church, from above, be freed from their obedience, or absolved from their oath of allegiance.

This is the doctrine which the doctors and professors of divinity hold and teach in our schools, and this all the candidates for degrees in divinity maintain in their public theses, &c.

To the third question the Sacred Faculty answers—That there is no principle of the Catholic faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with Heretics, who differ from them in religious opinions. On the contrary, it is *the unanimous doctrine* of Catholics, that the respect due to the name of God, so called to witness, requires that the oath be inviolably kept, to whomsoever it is pledged, whether Catholic, Heretic, or Infidel, &c.

Signed and sealed in due form, January 5, 1789.

University of Louvain.—The Faculty of Divinity at Louvain, having been requested to give her opinion upon the questions above stated, does it with readiness—but struck with astonishment, that such questions should, at the end of this eighteenth century, be proposed to any learned body, by inhabitants of a kingdom that glories in the talents and discernment of its natives. The Faculty being assembled for the above purpose, it is agreed with the unanimous assent of all voices to answer the first and second queries absolutely in the negative.

The Faculty does not think it incumbent upon her in this place to enter upon the proofs of her opinion, or to shew how it is supported by passages in the Holy Scriptures, or the writings of antiquity. That has already been done by Bossuet, De Marca, the two Barclays, Goldastus, the Pithæuses, Argentre Widrington, and his Majesty King James the First, in his Dissertation against Bellarmine and Du Perron, and by many others, &c.

The Faculty then proceeds to declare, that the sovereign power of the state is in no wise (not even indirectly as it is termed) subject to, or dependant upon any other power, though it be a spiritual power, or even though it be instituted for eternal salvation, &c.

That no man, nor any assembly of men, however eminent in dignity and power, not even the whole body of the Catholic church, though assembled in general council, can, upon any ground or pretence whatsoever, weaken the bond of union between the sovereign and the people; still less can

they absolve or free the subjects from their oath of allegiance.

Proceeding to the third question, the said Faculty of Divinity (in perfect wonder that such a question should be proposed to her) most positively and unequivocally answers—That there is not, and there never has been, among the Catholics, or in the doctrines of the church of Rome, any law or principle which makes it lawful for Catholics to break their faith with Heretics, or others of a different persuasion from themselves in matters of religion, either in public or private concerns.

The Faculty declares the doctrine of the Catholics to be, that the divine and natural law, which makes it a duty to keep faith and promises, is the same; and is neither shaken nor diminished, if those with whom the engagement is made, hold erroneous opinions in matters of religion, &c.

Signed in due form on the 18th of November, 1788.

University of Alcalá.—To the first question it is answered—That none of the persons mentioned in the proposed question, either individually, or collectively in council assembled, have any right in civil matters; but that all civil power, jurisdiction and pre-eminence, are derived from inheritance, election, the consent of the people, and other such titles of that nature.

To the second it is answered, in like manner—That none of the persons above-mentioned have a power to absolve the subjects of his Britannic Majesty from their oaths of allegiance.

To the third question it is answered—That the doctrine which would exempt Catholics from the obligation of keeping faith with Heretics, or with any other persons who dissent from them in matters of religion, instead of being an article of Catholic faith, is entirely repugnant to its tenets.

Signed in the usual form, March 17th, 1789.

University of Salamanca.—To the first question it is answered—That neither pope, nor cardinals, nor any assembly or individual of the Catholic church, have, as such, any civil authority, power, jurisdiction or pre-eminence, in the kingdom of England.

To the second it is answered—That neither pope nor cardinals, nor any assembly or individual of the Catholic church, can, as such, absolve the subjects of Great Britain from

their oaths of allegiance, or dispense with its obligations.

To the third it is answered—That it is no article of Catholic faith, with Heretics, or with persons of any other description, who dissent from them in matters of religion.

Signed in the usual form, March 7th, 1789.

University of Valladolid.—To the first question it is answered—That neither pope, cardinals, or even a general council, have any civil authority, power, jurisdiction or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, in the kingdom of Great Britain; or over any other kingdom or province in which they possess no temporal dominion.

To the second it is answered—That neither pope nor cardinals, nor even a general council, can absolve the subjects of Great Britain from their oaths of allegiance, or dispense with their obligation.

To the third it is answered—That the obligation of keeping faith is grounded on the law of nature, which binds all men equally, without respect to their religious opinions; and with regard to Catholics, it is still more cogent, as it is confirmed by the principles of their religion.

Signed in the usual form, February 17th, 1789.

The circulation of this invincible refutation of the pernicious tenets and pretensions imputed to the Roman Catholics, signed by the clergy and the laity, was productive of the most beneficial consequences. The fears of the timid Protestants were removed, and the opponents of the Catholics nearly silenced.

The attention of the general committee was then necessarily directed to the charge of being incompetent to declare the wishes of the Catholic body, uttered in and out of parliament. In the debate on their petition, which was rejected, on the 20th of February, Sir Boyle Roche asked, “ Who were they, who affected to be the repre-

representatives of the Roman Catholics of Ireland? Were there amongst them any of the ancient nobility, or of the gentry of Ireland? No—not one. There was, indeed, Mr. Edward Byrne, a sugar-baker, a seller of wines and other commodities, and he was the first name, and put in front of the battle. There was another, John Keogh; and who was he? Why he was a retailer of poplins in Dame-street. These men met over their porter to consider of commanding the government; they met at chop-houses, at Derham's chop-house in particular, where the former of them in his cups happened to dream that he was the Nabob of Ireland. As to the rest of them, they were so obscure, that he could neither recollect nor describe them. Were these the representatives of the Roman Catholic nobility and gentry? No. Was there one respectable name amongst them? No. These fellows represented themselves, and misrepresented the Roman Catholics of Ireland. Neither the Catholic nobility, the catholic gentry, nor the catholic clergy, had any thing to do with it—and he considered it to be both an insolent and a degrading petition. As to the Belfast petition, they had moved heaven and earth, in order to foment disturbance in the country. At the same time that they were framing this petition in behalf of the Roman Catholics, they were holding a correspondence with the French National Assembly, while the Dublin petitioners were espousing the cause of a renegado, and entertaining a French democrat, who had fled from his own country, to infect this with the poison of his

principles. This same John Keogh, had distributed several thousands of Payne's pamphlet through the country, and they were circulated by the petitioners. But the Roman Catholic nobility and gentry abhorred those abominations. No imputation could be laid at their door upon this head, and therefore he hoped that all reflections would rest where they ought, upon the scum of the earth. Shame and disgrace! are such men the representatives of the catholics of Ireland? No. The Roman Catholics are not involved in their misconduct. Their sentiments are not to be collected from a meeting composed of turbulent men, shop-keepers and shop-lifters, and for this reason he trusted that the house would not go into the committee on the petition. In the year 84, he recollected another committee like the present, it was the tarring and feathering committee, which was as much the representative of the Roman Catholics, as that which now affected to speak for them."

These objections of incompetency, thus virulently urged, could not be overlooked, unless the pursuit of emancipation was relinquished. A mode was immediately adopted, whereby the sentiments of every individual of the Catholic body throughout Ireland should be ascertained, and unequivocally declared. The general committee, and the gentlemen who had withdrawn themselves from it, mutually regretted their division, which they saw used by their opponents as a pretext for withholding the elective franchise, and an equal participation of the benefits of the trial by jury.

A reconciliation was effected; and all former differences of opinion, it was agreed, should be buried in oblivion on both sides. The necessary unanimity being attained, it was determined, that delegates should be chosen in such a manner as that it should be evident they were nominated by the people. For this purpose, meetings were directed to be held in each parish throughout Ireland, for the appointment of one or two of the most respectable persons in each as electors. These electors, so appointed, were to choose from one to four of their own residents, as delegates to the general committee from each county. In addition to these, associate delegates for each county, residents of Dublin, were to be chosen, in order to keep up a regular correspondence with their colleagues in the country, and to inform the county through them, of all proceedings in the general committee, at such times as the county delegates should be absent.

The first great business, which was to engage their attention, the general committee declared to be, “ An humble application to our gracious sovereign, submitting to him their loyalty and attachment, their obedience to the laws, a true statement of their situation, and of the laws which operated against them; and humbly beseeching that they may be restored to the elective franchise, and an equal participation in the benefits of the trial by jury. “ We have the FIRST AUTHORITY for asserting, (they also stated,) that this application will have infinite weight with our gracious sovereign and with parliament, if our friends are

qualified to declare, that it is the universal wish of every Catholic in the nation."

The agitation which the appearance of this plan immediately produced, was most extraordinary. Wherever their adversaries were sufficiently strong, corporate or county meetings were held to reprobate the plan, and to resist the so-stiled exorbitant pretensions of the Catholics; but if defeat, or even formidable resistance was dreaded, similar resolutions were entered into by the grand juries. These breathed no common opposition. In general, they charged the committee with the intention of overawing the legislature; they drew a line of circumvallation round the protestant ascendancy, and pledged those who adopted them, as solemnly as could be done by words, to resist with their lives and fortunes every attempt to regain a right within its limits. The grand jury of the county of Louth, with the Speaker of the House of Commons at their head, declared, that "the allowing Roman Catholics the right of voting for members to serve in parliament, or admitting them to any participation in the government of the kingdom, was incompatible with the safety of the Protestant establishment, the continuance of the succession to the crown in the illustrious House of Hanover, and finally tended to shake, if not destroy, their connexion with Great Britain, on the continuance and inseparability of which depended the happiness and prosperity of the kingdom; that they would oppose every attempt towards such a dangerous innovation, and that they would support with their lives and for-

tunes the present constitution, and the settlement of the throne on his Majesty's Protestant House." The freeholders of the county of Limerick, stimulated by the lord chancellor, charged the Catholics with intending to intimidate the legislature, to force a repeal of the penal laws, and to create a popish democracy for their government and direction in pursuit of whatever objects might be holden out to them by turbulent and seditious men. The grand jury of the county of Cork denominated the plan "an unconstitutional proceeding, of the most alarming, dangerous and seditious tendency; an attempt to overawe parliament," &c. The corporation of Dublin went still further; for, alluding to the possibility of government's finally acceding to the Catholic claims, it expressly said, that "the Protestants of Ireland would not be compelled, by any authority whatever, to abandon that political situation, which their forefathers won with their swords, and which is therefore their birthright;" and to this threatened resistance against the constituted authorities, it solemnly pledged the lives and fortunes of its members. That no doubt might be entertained as to the extent of what it was determined at all hazards to maintain, it gave a definition of protestant ascendancy in these words: "A protestant king of Ireland, a protestant parliament, a protestant hierarchy, protestant electors and government, the benches of justice, the army and the revenue, through all their branches and details, protestant; and this system supported by a connexion with the pro-

testant realm of England." What gave to those resolutions a still more important appearance was, that they seemed to be made with the immediate sanction of government; as the most confidential servants of the crown, and even its ministers, stepped forward to give them countenance and support in their respective counties. This authoritative interference on the part of persons high in the administration of the country, against a plan, calculated to ascertain an universal wish, formed a very striking and suspicious contrast with the assertion of the committee, that it had the first authority to declare an application would have infinite weight, if it appeared to be the wish of every Catholic in the nation. An assurance possibly given under the idea, that compliance with the requisite would be impracticable.

The charge of illegality, repeated from various quarters, determined the committee to submit the plan itself to the opinion of two eminent lawyers, the Hon. Simon Butler and Beresford Burston, Esq., whose answers, being entirely favourable, were printed, and universally dispersed throughout the country. The legality of the measure was no longer expressly questioned; the elections tranquilly proceeded, and the Catholic Convention assembled on the 2d of December, 1792.

Meanwhile the Catholics of the city of Dublin, convened by public notice, replied in a very dignified stile to the different corporations, county and grand jury resolutions. Eight gentlemen, Messrs. Randall M'Donald, John Keogh, Hugh Hamill, Edward Byrne, Thomas Ryan, Thomas

Warren, Charles Ryan, and John Ball, executed this important task.

We the Catholics of the city of Dublin, have read with extreme concern, the resolutions of different bodies of our Protestant fellow subjects, in which they express their disapprobation of the conduct of our committee, and their aversion to our claims of the elective franchise, and an equal participation of the trial by jury. But the address of the corporation of this city to the Protestants of Ireland, has filled us most peculiarly with mortification and surprise; as Irishmen, we are astonished and grieved, that the first corporation of this kingdom should have put forth a publication, teeming with false principles of government, and false statements of historic facts; as Catholics, we lament, that the same body should have misconceived and mis-stated our conduct and our objects.

We have read of what is called the right of conquest; it has also been called the right of robbery: but we do not imagine, that a doctrine, so subversive of the peace and settlement of society, and of the immutable rules of justice, that a doctrine, which in its consequences so completely warrants, and in its language so wantonly provokes resistance, would be made the foundation of the Protestant claims to the government of this country. We did not expect, that a doctrine, exploded in this island by the revolution of 1782, would be revived to our oppression. If conquest and the right of the sword could justify the stronger in retaining dominion, why did Great Britain abdicate her legislative supremacy over Ireland? or why were we all, Protestants and Catholics, actuated as one man to resist so legitimate an authority? Is that monstrous and exploded principle still to be retained for our peculiar subjection, which was felt to be false by every honest man, when applied to the subjection of his native land?

We are desired in that address to "rest contented with the most perfect toleration of our religion, the fullest security of our property, and the most complete personal liberty." They are great and important blessings, but they are not secure to any man who is a slave. They are held but by sufferance, by those who are tried without their consent, and legislated for without being represented.

We agree with the corporation in the spirit of one assertion, they “know of no power under Heaven authorized to alienate this their most valuable inheritance.” Let our claims be tried by the same principle. The Catholics were the constituents of the very parliament which deprived them of their franchise, and thereby did indeed “alienate their most valuable inheritance!” and though we have acquiesced under that unjust deprivation for sixty-five years, and though we will continue to acquiesce, so long as the statute stands in its present form, we must still declare, as a political truth, that no elected and delegated legislature has a right to disfranchise its electors and delegators, who never entrusted their power to that body for the purpose of being made the instrument of its own destruction. And we further say, that, in our judgment, not even those electors could empower their representatives to enslave us, their posterity.

We are likewise told by the corporation, that “experience has taught them, that without the ruin of the Protestant establishment, the Catholic cannot be allowed the smallest influence in the state.” The inclinations of our body are not to subvert any establishment in this country; if they were, we are not competent to so absurd a project: and no strength, that we might derive from the restoration of our rights, would enable us to effect it, while the King, the House of Lords, the Irish Privy Council, the English Privy Council, and the Chancellors of both countries, are unalterably Protestant. If by establishment be meant religious establishment, we must further reply, that no experience has taught them so; the Protestant religion was dominant in this country long before our ancestors lost their elective franchise. Is it only since the year 1727, that Protestantism has been the religion of the state in Ireland? If by establishment be meant the government of the country, it is equally ill-founded; *that* is instituted for the freedom and happiness of the governed; and yet this address would imply, that procuring freedom and happiness for three-fourths of this kingdom, would cause the utter ruin of our government. A greater libel against the constitution of Ireland was never uttered by its most declared enemy. It is sufficiently capacious to give liberty to every man; and the more its base is widened, and its blessings diffused, the more it will be fortified against the efforts of time

and despotism. Nor does experience warrant the assertion. Our loss of the right of citizenship is comparatively modern; and the government of this country neither required nor gained any accession of strength by our slavery. That was effected in a time of profound tranquillity, after the uninterrupted loyalty and peaceable demeanour of our ancestors had been experienced and acknowledged for thirty-six years from the capitulation of Limerick. The causes that induced this law are now almost forgotten; but if tradition be to be believed, where history is silent, it was enacted to satisfy court intrigue, not public security; to change the balance of power between Protestant families in two or three counties of this kingdom, not to give any increase of power to the Protestants at large.

It is suggested in that address, that the Revolution was established in Ireland by force, or as it is profanely called, by "an appeal to Heaven." The Revolution in England, derived its glory and its stability from this great truth, that it was founded on the people's will. Does the Revolution in Ireland rest upon a different foundation? Is it supported by a principle, which is the reverse of that, which rendered the Revolution in England the admiration of the world? No! it is not so; we must all concur in calumniating that great event, that our ancestors may also be calumniated. The Revolution in Ireland was not completed by the battles of the Boyne or Aughrim, but by the articles of Limerick. It was consented to by all, Protestants and Catholics. The consent of the Catholics was obtained to a compact, *as solemnly ratified, and as speedily broken*, as any in the records of history. By that compact, the enjoyment of all their rights was stipulated for to our ancestors, as a declaration of their consent. The restoration of those rights was therefore connected with the Revolution settlement of this kingdom.

We are also told, that those laws were enacted to "deprive the Roman Catholics of political power, in consequence of the many and great efforts made by them in support of their Popish King and French connexions." When, where, or how were those many and great efforts made? From their number and their magnitude, those who so confidently advance this assertion, cannot, we presume, be at a loss for an instance; but we defy the malice of invention to produce *one*. *Our forefathers never violated the articles of Limerick.* From

the time that they consented to the Revolution in 1691, they never made any efforts either in support of a Popish King, or French connexions, or of any other enemy to King William and his successors. Had they even done so, the fault had been theirs—why not the punishment theirs also? Or, is it intended to be insinuated to fellow-subjects who know our loyalty, that *we* are anxious to have this country “governed by an arbitrary and unconstitutional Popish tyrant, and dependant upon France;” or that *we do not desire* to “enjoy the blessings of a free Protestant government, a Protestant monarch limited by the constitution, (as settled by the Revolution,) and an intimate connexion with the free empire of Britain?” If *we do*, why is the law continued, after the reason of enacting has ceased?

We admit, that from the moment the Protestant began to make concessions, the Roman Catholic began to extend his claims. The first kindness of our Protestant brethren shewed a returning spirit of liberality and affection. Before that time we were not so rash as to raise our minds to the hopes of citizenship. But we were never guilty of the deceit imputed to us, of declaring that a little would satisfy us, and when that little was granted, of claiming more. Our own attention, as well as that of our Protestant fellow subjects, was directed to the most immediate and most practicable redress. We did not embarrass the measure by remote and extraneous considerations, but we never did, either in word or thought, *and we never will forego our hopes of emancipation*. Freemen would not believe us, if we said that we should be induced by any comparatively small alleviation of our grievances, to consent to perpetual slavery.

We lament that it is *not true*, “that the last session of parliament left us in no wise different from our Protestant fellow-subjects, save only in the exercise of political power.” That assertion is falsified by the heavy code of penal laws still in force against us, many of which infringe on that security of property, and that personal liberty, which it is alleged we possess. But it is not power, it is protection we solicit. It is not power, including in it the notion of *superiority*—it is the *equal enjoyment* of our rights that we claim.

The Corporation tell us, that they will not be compelled by any authority whatever, “to abandon that political situ-

ation, which their forefathers won with their swords, and which they have resolved with their lives and fortunes to maintain." Are we the seditious men, that would overawe the legislature and our fellow countrymen? No; our views are peaceable, and neither insult nor oppression shall make us forget our loyalty. But wherefore this untimely threat? It wears the appearance of first urging us to despair by an eternal proscription, and then of throwing down the gauntlet of civil war. We too have lives and fortunes, which we are ready to devote to the service of our country, whenever *real danger* shall require it; but we will never degrade that last and most solemn act of patriotism into an idle menace and an insolent bravado.

The great question of our emancipation is now afloat, we have never sought to acquire it by force, and we hope for it now only from the wisdom of the legislature, and affection of our Protestant brethren. But, we here solemnly and publicly declare, that we never will, through any change of time or circumstance, save the actual *restoration of our rights*, desist from the peaceable and lawful pursuit of the two great objects of our hopes—the *right of elective franchise, and an equal share in the benefit of the trial by jury*.

This meeting also embraced the opportunity it afforded, to express their gratitude to the illustrious characters, in both houses of parliament, who had supported their emancipation; also to the citizens of Belfast, the Belfast Volunteers, the freeholders of Cork, and all of their Protestant brethren, who had manifested a similar inclination. The chairman, Mr. T. Braughall, was ordered to transmit copies of this day's proceedings to the chairman of the town-meeting at Belfast; the chairmen of the different societies of United Irishmen; the different reviewing officers of Ulster, &c.

Agreeable to the resolution of the Catholic committee, the Catholic Convention prepared a

petition to his Majesty, setting forth the disabilities under which his Irish Catholic subjects laboured; praying that he would recommend to his parliament of Ireland to take into consideration the whole of their situation; and expressing their wish to be restored to the rights and privileges of the constitution of their country. The next question was, how it should be forwarded to England. Some were for transmitting it in the ordinary mode, through the viceroy; and this government itself seemed very solicitous to procure. The measure was expressly solicited by lord Donoughmore, who, with his family, had always espoused the Catholic cause; and who was likewise among the most steady supporters of administration. He waited outside the hall, where the convention met, to know their determination; he was informed by order of the meeting, that if the lord lieutenant would promise to forward the petition, with a recommendation in its favour, it should be intrusted to him. Lord Donoughmore having carried this communication to the castle, returned with an answer, that his excellency could not, in his official situation, pledge himself to the required recommendation; a remembrance of the hostile denunciations during the preceding summer—a suspicion of the manner in which they were excited, prevailed; and it was determined that the petition should be presented to the king himself, by deputies of their own appointment. These were Messrs. Edward Byrne, John Keogh, James Edward Devereux, Christopher Bellew, and Sir Thomas

French, Bart. They were accompanied by Mr. T. W. Tone, who, though a protestant, had, in consequence of his very uncommon talents and exertions in the Catholic cause, been appointed one of the secretaries to the committee, and the secretary to the delegation.

That the friendly dispositions of their Protestant brethren might be manifested, the delegation chose to pass through the North. They were received at Belfast with the most marked affection; some of the most respectable gentlemen waited upon them at the Donegal Arms, and on their departure, their carriages were drawn through the streets, by a presbyterian populace, amidst the liveliest shouts of joy and wishes for their success. The delegates returned these expressions of affection and sympathy, by the most grateful acknowledgments, and assurances of their determination to maintain that union, which formed the strength of Ireland. On the 2d of January, 1793, the delegates were introduced to his Majesty, by the secretary of state for the home department, Mr. Dundas, and presented the petition, which the king was pleased graciously to receive.

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Catholics, on behalf of themselves and the rest of his Catholic Subjects of the Kingdom of Ireland.

Most gracious Sovereign,

We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects of your kingdom of Ireland, professing the Catholic religion, presume to approach your Majesty, who are the common father of all your people, and humbly to submit to your con-

sideration the manifold incapacities and oppressive disqualifications under which we labour.

For, may it please your Majesty, after a century of uninterrupted loyalty, in which time five foreign wars and two domestic rebellions have occurred, after having taken every oath of allegiance and fidelity to your Majesty, and given, and being still ready to give, every pledge, which can be devised for their peaceable demeanour and unconditional submission to the laws, the Catholics of Ireland stand obnoxious to a long catalogue of statutes, inflicting on dutiful and meritorious subjects pains and penalties of an extent and severity, which scarce any degree of delinquency can warrant, and prolonged to a period, when no necessity can be alleged to justify their continuance.

In the first place, we beg leave with all humility to represent to your Majesty, that notwithstanding the lowest departments in your Majesty's fleets and armies are largely supplied by our numbers, and your revenue in this country to a great degree supported by our contributions, we are disabled from serving your Majesty in any office of trust and emolument whatsoever, civil or military—a proscription, which disregards capacity or merit, admits of neither qualification nor degree, and rests as an universal stigma of distrust upon the whole body of your Catholic subjects.

We are interdicted from all municipal stations, and the franchise of all guilds and corporations; and our exclusion from the benefits annexed to those situations is not an evil terminating in itself; for, by giving an advantage over us to those, in whom they are exclusively vested, they establish throughout the kingdom a species of qualified monopoly, uniformly operating in our disfavour, contrary to the spirit, and highly detrimental to the freedom of trade.

We may not found nor endow any university, college, or school, for the education of our children; and we are interdicted from obtaining degrees in the University of Dublin, by the several statutes and charters now in force therein.

We are totally prohibited from keeping or using weapons for the defence of our houses, families, or persons, whereby we are exposed to the violence of burglary, robbery, and assassination; and to enforce this prohibition, contravening that great original law of nature, which enjoins us to self-

defence, a variety of statutes exist, not less grievous and oppressive in their provisions, than unjust in their object; by one of which, enacted so lately as within these sixteen years, every of your Majesty's Catholic subjects, of whatever rank or degree, peer or peasant, is compellable by any magistrate to come forward and convict himself of what may be thought a singular offence in a country professing to be free—keeping arms for his defence; or, if he shall refuse so to do, may incur not only fine and imprisonment, but the vile and ignominious punishments of the pillory and whipping;—penalties appropriated to the most infamous malefactors, and more terrible to a liberal mind than death itself.

No Catholic whatsoever, as we apprehend, has his personal property secure. The law allows and encourages the disobedient and unnatural child to conform and deprive him of it: the unhappy father does not, even by the surrender of his all, purchase his repose; he may be attacked by new bills, if his future industry be successful, and again be plundered by due process of law.

We are excluded, or may be excluded, from all Petit Juries, in civil actions, where one of the parties is a Protestant; and we are further excluded from all Petit Juries in trials by information or indictment founded on any of the Popery laws; by which law we most humbly submit to your Majesty, that your loyal subjects, the Catholics of Ireland, are in this, their native land, in a worse situation than that of aliens, for they may demand an equitable privilege denied to us, of having half their jury aliens like themselves.

We may not serve on grand juries, unless, which it is scarcely possible can ever happen, there should not be found a sufficiency of Protestants to complete the pannel; contrary to that humane and equitable principle of the law, which says, that no man shall be convicted of any capital offence, unless by the concurring verdicts of two juries of his neighbours and equals; whereby, and to this we humbly presume more particularly to implore your royal attention, we are deprived of the great palladium of the constitution, Trial by our Peers, independent of the manifest injustice of our property being taxed in assessments by a body, from which we are formally excluded.

We avoid a further enumeration of inferior grievances;

but may it please your Majesty, there remains one incapacity, which your loyal subjects, the Catholics of Ireland, feel with most poignant anguish of mind, as being the badge of unmerited disgrace and ignominy, and the cause and bitter aggravation of all our other calamities; we are deprived of the elective franchise, to the manifest perversion of the spirit of the constitution, inasmuch as your faithful subjects are thereby taxed where they are not represented, actually or virtually, and bound by laws, in the framing of which they have no power to give or withhold their assent; and we most humbly implore your Majesty to believe, that this our prime and heavy grievance is not an evil merely speculative, but is attended with great distress to all ranks, and in many instances, with the total ruin and destruction of the lower orders of your Majesty's faithful and loyal subjects, the Catholics of Ireland; for may it please your Majesty, not to mention the infinite variety of advantages in point of protection and otherwise, which the enjoyment of the elective franchise gives to those who possess it, nor the consequent inconveniences, to which those who are deprived thereof are liable; not to mention the disgrace to three-fourths of your loyal subjects of Ireland, of living the only body of men incapable of franchise, in a nation possessing a free constitution, it continually happens, and of necessity from the malignant nature of the law must happen, that multitudes of the Catholic tenantry in divers counties in this kingdom are, at the expiration of their leases, expelled from their tenements and farms to make room for Protestant freeholders, who, by their votes, may contribute to the weight and importance of their landlords; a circumstance, which renders the recurrence of a general election, that period which is the boast and laudable triumph of our Protestant brethren—a visitation and heavy curse to us, your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects. And may it please your Majesty, this uncertainty of possession to your Majesty's Catholic subjects, operates as a perpetual restraint and discouragement on industry and the spirit of cultivation, whereby it happens, that this your Majesty's kingdom of Ireland, possessing many and great national advantages of soil and climate, so as to be exceeded therein by few, if any countries on the earth, is yet prevented from availing herself thereof so fully

as she otherwise might, to the furtherance of your Majesty's honour, and the more effectual support of your service.

And, may it please your Majesty, the evil does not even rest here; for many of your Majesty's Catholic subjects, to preserve their families from total destruction, submit to a nominal conformity against their conviction and their conscience; and, preferring perjury to famine, take oaths which they utterly disbelieve, a circumstance, which, we doubt not, will shock your Majesty's well known and exemplary piety, not less than the misery which drives those unhappy wretches to so desperate a measure, must distress and wound your royal clemency and commiseration.

And, may it please your Majesty, though we might here rest our case on its own merits, justice, and expediency, yet we further presume humbly to submit to your Majesty, that the right of franchise was, with divers other rights, enjoyed by the Catholics of this kingdom, from the first adoption of the English Constitution by our forefathers, was secured to at least a great part of our body by the treaty of Limerick, in 1691, guaranteed by your Majesty's royal predecessors, King William and Queen Mary, and finally confirmed and ratified by parliament; notwithstanding which, and in direct breach of the public faith of the nation thus solemnly pledged, for which our ancestors paid a valuable consideration, in the surrender of their arms, and a great part of this kingdom, and notwithstanding the most scrupulous adherence, on our part, to the terms of the said treaty, and our unremitting loyalty from that day to the present, the said right of elective franchise was finally and universally taken away from the Catholics of Ireland, so lately as the first year of his Majesty King George the Second.

And when we thus presume to submit this infraction of the treaty of Limerick to your Majesty's royal notice, it is not that we ourselves consider it to be the strong part of our case; for though our rights were recognized, they were by no means created by that treaty; and we do with all humility conceive, that if no such event as the treaty had ever taken place, your Majesty's Catholic subjects, from their unvarying loyalty, and dutiful submission to the laws, and from the great support afforded by them to your Majesty's

government in this country, as well as in their personal service, in your Majesty's fleets and armies, as from the taxes and revenues levied on their property, are fully competent, and justly entitled to participate and enjoy the blessings of the Constitution of their country.

And now that we have, with all humility, submitted our grievances to your Majesty, permit us, most gracious Sovereign, again to represent our sincere attachment to the Constitution, as established in three estates of King, Lords, and Commons, our uninterrupted loyalty, peaceable demeanour, and submission to the laws for one hundred years; and our determination to persevere in the same dutiful conduct, which has, under your Majesty's happy auspices, procured us those relaxations of the penal statutes, which the wisdom of the legislature has from time to time thought proper to grant; we humbly presume to hope, that your Majesty, in your paternal goodness and affection towards a numerous and oppressed body of your loyal subjects, may be graciously pleased to recommend to your parliament of Ireland, to take into their consideration the whole of our situation, our numbers, our merits, and our sufferings; and as we do not give place to any of your Majesty's subjects, in loyalty and attachment to your Majesty's sacred person, we cannot suppress our wishes of being restored to the rights and privileges of the Constitution of our country, and thereby becoming more worthy, as well as more capable, of rendering your Majesty that service which it is not less our duty than our inclination to afford.

So may your Majesty transmit to your latest posterity, a crown secured by public advantage and public affection; and so may your Royal Person become, if possible, more dear to your grateful people.

To this was affixed the signatures of the Most Reverend Dr. Troy and the Right Reverend Dr. Moylan, on behalf of themselves and the Roman Catholic prelates and clergy of Ireland, and by the delegates for the different districts which they severally represented.

The United Irishmen were not less actively employed. Immediately after their declaration announced their existence, the United Irishmen issued a circular letter, recommending the speedy formation of similar societies throughout the island. Soon after they published A Digest of the Popery laws, which exhibited the whole of that oppressive code, divested of its technical garb, made a reference to its detailed enormities easy, and effected more in bringing the system and its authors into abhorrence, than had been ever done by any other publication. This report classed the Popery laws under the general heads of Education, Guardianship, Marriage, Self-defence, Exercise of Religion, Enjoyment and Disposition of Property, Acquisition of Property and Franchises. To enable a reader, not habituated to the intricacies of statute reading, to form a judgment of the spirit of the whole system, the following simple view of the actual state of the then existing popery laws, was prefixed to a second edition of this digest.

EDUCATION.—In every well regulated community, the education of youth has been an object of the greatest notice.

The Irish popery laws have not been inoperative on this point.

Those who are acquainted with the constitution of our university need not be informed, that none, except those who conform to the established church, can be admitted to study there, and that none can obtain the degrees therein, who have not previously taken all the tests, oaths and declarations; so that papists are entirely excluded from education in the authorized establishment for learning in their own country.

No popish university or college can be erected or endowed.

No popish school can be endowed.

But, if we truly conceive the sense of the legislature, (which from the obscurity of its language in this as in other instances, is not easy,) a papist, on taking the oath of allegiance, and subscribing the declaration prescribed by the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. c. 35. does thereby *qualify* himself to instruct in learning, publicly and privately, youth of his own persuasion; but lest he should educate any protestants, and thereby have opportunity of making proselytes, the law has provided, that he shall not receive into his school any protestant, or become an usher, under-master or assistant to a protestant school-master.

Protestants and converts from popery, educating or permitting their children (not already papists, and above *fourteen* years of age) to be educated papists, shall be subject to such disabilities as papists are.

Any *convert*, if a *justice of peace*, who educates any of his children under *sixteen* years of age in the popish religion, shall, on conviction of acting as such, suffer one year's imprisonment, forfeit £100, and be incapable of being an executor, administrator or guardian.

The children of papists are deemed papists until they conform, except such as from the age of *twelve* years have been constantly bred up in the protestant religion, and received the sacrament according to the church of Ireland, who shall be reputed protestants, unless they at any time after the age of *eighteen* years declare themselves of the communion of the church of Rome, or be present at matins or vespers according to the practice of that church, in which case they shall be subject to all the penalties affecting converts relapsing to popery.

Upon this view of the law concerning education, the nation may judge of the *liberal indulgence* afforded to the *Roman catholics* by admitting them to the benefits of education.

GUARDIANSHIP.—The law concerning guardianship stands simply thus:—Papists, other than ecclesiastics, taking the oath of allegiance, and subscribing the declaration prescribed by the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35, are thereby qualified to be guardians of their own children or of the child of a papist, but not of the child of a protestant.

MARRIAGE.—As to the law concerning marriage, it is extremely simple in its severity, as it consists of but one re-

gulation for every marriage *celebrated* by a popish priest, between two protestants, or between a papist and any person who has been or has professed him or herself to be a protestant at any time within twelve months before such marriage, shall be null and void without any process, judgment or sentence of law whatsoever; and nevertheless, the popish priest who *celebrates* such marriage shall on conviction be guilty of felony without benefit of clergy or of the statute, and suffer *death* accordingly: for, says the lawyer, the *celebration*, and not the *marriage*, constitutes his offence.—In order to obtain evidence of the fact, two justices of the peace are empowered to summon any persons whom they *suspect* to have been present at any marriage, which they *suspect* to have been made contrary to this law, as well as the parties *suspected* to be married, and such *suspected persons* and *suspected witnesses* declining to appear, or refusing to declare upon oath their knowledge of the facts, or refusing after declaration of the facts to enter into recognizance to prosecute, shall be imprisoned for three years.

It must be admitted, that the legislature has lately declared, that it shall and may be lawful to and for protestants and persons professing the popish religion to intermarry, provided the marriage be celebrated by a clergyman of the established church; but when it is considered, that, in the Roman catholic persuasion, marriage is a *sacrament*, and ought to be celebrated according to the rites and ceremonies of that church, it will be readily granted, that by establishing the legality of inter-marriages no very *liberal indulgence* was offered to the Roman catholics, the more especially as there is a saving in favour of the law that enacts, “that a protestant married to a papist, or a convert married since his conformity to a papist, shall not be entitled to vote at any election of *members to serve in parliament*, in right of being a *freeholder or protestant inhabitant of a borough*.”

SELF-DEFENCE.—There is another head upon which the legislature has thought proper to change the course of the common law: it is the *right of self-defence*, which is complicated with the use of *arms*. Now this right, though one of the laws of nature, and indeed the first of them, is yet so liable to so many dangerous abuses, that wise communities have found it necessary to set several restrictions upon it,

especially temporary ones, on some imminent danger to the public from foreign invasion. The method which the statute law of Ireland has taken upon this delicate article is, to get rid of all the difficulties at once, by an universal prohibition to all persons, who are not protestants, at all times, and under all circumstances, to use or keep any kind of weapons whatsoever. In order to enforce this regulation, severe penalties, without any regard to proportion, are inflicted; new modes of inquisition are enjoined; the largest powers are vested in the lowest magistrates. Any justice of the peace, or any magistrate of a city or town corporate, with or *without* information, by themselves or by their warrant, at their discretion, whenever they think proper, at any hour of the day or *night*, are empowered *forcibly* to enter, and to search the house of any papist, or of any *protestant* whom they *suspect* to keep arms in trust for a papist. This, we say, they may do at their discretion; and it seems a pretty ample power to be vested in the hands of that class of magistrates.

Besides the discretionary and occasional search, the law has prescribed one that is general and periodical. It is to be made annually, under the warrants of justices of peace and magistrates of corporations, by the high and petty constables, or any others whom they choose to authorize, with all the powers, and with the same circumstances in every respect, which attend the discretionary and occasional search.

Not trusting, however, to the activity of the magistrates proceeding officially, the law has invited voluntary informers by the distribution of considerable rewards, and even pressed involuntary into the service, by the dread of very heavy penalties.—With regard to the latter method, justices of the peace, and magistrates of corporations, are empowered to summon before them any person whatsoever, and to tender to him an oath, by which they oblige him to discover concerning all persons, without distinctions of propinquity or connexion, who have any arms concealed contrary to law, and even whether he himself has any. His refusal to appear, or appearing, his refusal to discover and inform, subjects him to *fine and imprisonment, or such corporal punishment of pillory or whipping* as the court shall in its *discretion* think proper.—Thus all persons, peers and peeresses, protestants as well as papists, may be summoned to perform this hono-

able service, by the bailiff of a corporation of a few straggling cottages, and refusing to perform it, are liable to be fined and imprisoned, pilloried or whipped.—The punishment for the first offence in *peers* and *peeresses*, if not pilloried or whipped, is £300, and for the second offence the punishment is no less than the penalties of a person attainted in a *præmunire*, that is, “the offender shall be out of the king’s protection, and his or her lands and tenements, goods and chattels, forfeited to the king: and his or her body shall remain in prison at the king’s pleasure.”—The punishment for the first offence, in *persons of an inferior order*, if not pilloried or whipped, is (without any consideration of what their substance may be) £50, and one year’s imprisonment, and for the second offence they are subject to the penalties of a person attainted of a *præmunire*.—So far as to involuntary, now as to voluntary informers. If the punishment of the offender be a fine, the law entitles them to one half of the same.

The only exception to this law is, a licence from the lord lieutenant and privy council to keep such arms as shall be particularly expressed in the licence.—This possibility of a privilege is, by its own nature, so remote, on account of the difficulty of application in private cases to the supreme executive authority, that we do not believe there are ten persons now in the kingdom, who have been fortunate enough to obtain it.

EXERCISE OF RELIGION.—We will now say something concerning the exercise of religion.

All inhabitants of this realm must attend divine service, according to the established religion, at their parish church, upon Sunday and holiday, upon pain of ecclesiastical censures, and of forfeiting 12d. for every time of absence.

All superstitious meetings and assemblies of pilgrims at wells, and pretended sanctified places, are declared riots and unlawful assemblies, and punishable as such.

Magistrates are to demolish all crosses, pictures and inscriptions, that are any where publicly set up, and are the occasion of popish superstitions.

None shall bury in any suppressed monastery, abbey or convent, not used for divine service, or within the precincts thereof, upon pain of £10 from any person present, by order of a justice of peace.

Justices of peace are to suppress all monasteries, friaries, nunneries, or other popish fraternities or societies.

A popish *secular* ecclesiastic, who registers himself pursuant to the act for that purpose, and takes and subscribes the oath and declaration prescribed by the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35, and also a popish *regular* ecclesiastic, if he be in the kingdom at the passing of the 21st and 22d Geo. 3. c. 24, and makes the oath and declaration aforesaid, and registers himself, pursuant to the act for that purpose, in six months after the passing the said act of the 21st and 22d Geo. 3. c. 24, are authorized to officiate, provided they do not officiate in any church or chapel with a steeple or a bell, or at any funeral in any church-yard, or exercise any of the rites or ceremonies of the popish religion, or wear the habits of their order, (save within their several places of worship or in private houses) or shall use any symbol or mark of ecclesiastical dignity or authority, or assume or take any ecclesiastical rank or title, or procure, incite or persuade any protestant to become a papist.

All popish *regular* and *secular* ecclesiastics, not qualifying as above, or offending against any of the aforementioned provisions, and all papists exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction, are to be imprisoned till they be transported beyond seas, and if they should return from exile, they will thereby be guilty of high-treason, and suffer and forfeit as in case of high-treason—and whoever harbours them shall, for the first offence, forfeit £20; for the second offence £40; and for the third offence, all his lands of inheritance and freehold during his life, and all his goods and chattels.

Every popish priest who becomes a protestant, shall receive £40 yearly, from the county in which he last officiated as a Roman priest, during his residence in said county, until he shall be provided for by some ecclesiastical benefice or licensed curacy of the same or greater value.

If any person shall seduce a protestant to renounce the protestant and profess the popish religion, the seducer and the seduced shall incur the præmunire mentioned in the 16th Rich. 2.: that is, they “shall be put out of the king’s protection, their lands and goods forfeited to the king’s use, and they shall be attached by their bodies to answer to the king and his council.

ENJOYMENT AND DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY.—The popery penal law, in respect to *real estates* and *chattels real*, has been in a great measure done away; and, at this day, papists, upon taking the oath and subscribing the declaration mentioned in the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35, in the manner, and at the times and places prescribed by law, are *qualified* to enjoy and acquire *real estates* and *chattels real* nearly as fully and beneficially as other subjects may.

However there are some disabilities still remaining.

Papists are disabled to *buy* or *purchase* any *advowson*.—And the *right of presentation* of a papist to any ecclesiastical benefice, is vested in the crown.

Papists, making as aforesaid the oath and declaration mentioned in the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35, may take, hold and enjoy any lands, tenements or hereditaments, in any *manor* or *borough*, the freeholders or inhabitants whereof are entitled to vote for burgesses to represent such manor or borough in parliament, which shall descend from or be devised or transferred by a *papist* seized in fee or tail, in law or in equity, of the same, at the passing of the 17th and 18th Geo. 3. ch. 49, or person deriving from a *papist* then so seized.

If any *protestant* is seised of any lands, tenements or hereditaments, in *such manor* or *borough*, no papist is capable of taking the same, by reason of any *descent*, *devise*, or *gift*, from such *protestant*; but the law vests the same, until his conformity, in the next protestant of the inheritable blood.

Papists, upon making as aforesaid the oath and declaration before-mentioned, are not disabled from taking any *lease* in lands, tenements or hereditaments, in any *such manor* or *borough*, for *any term of years not exceeding 999 years certain*, or for *any term of years determinable on any number of lives not exceeding five*, with or without liberty of committing waste, and disposing of the same by will or otherwise, as fully and beneficially, to all intents and purposes, as any other his majesty's subjects may, save that upon every such lease a rent *bonâ fide* to be paid in money shall be reserved, and save that a *maintenance* and *portion* may be granted thereout to any child of a popish parent possessed of the same, upon a bill filed against such parent in chancery, pursuant to the 2d Anne, ch. 6. which enacts, "that upon a bill filed in chancery by a child of a popish parent, professing or

desirous to profess the protestant religion, against such parent, that court may make such order for the *maintenance* of such child, not maintained by such parent, suitable to the degree and ability of such parent and age of such child, and *also* for the *portion* of such child, to be paid at the death of such parent, as the court shall judge fit, suitable to the degree and ability of such parent."

But if any papist *buys* or *purchases* lands, tenements or hereditaments, in *such manor* or *borough*, from any *protestant*, or any leases or terms thereof, other than for the beforementioned term of 999 years, or other number of years determinable on five lives, [a lease for a term of years is not a freehold, and does not confer the right of suffrage,] *such* lands, tenements and hereditaments, so conveyed or leased, and all collateral securities made or entered into to cover or make good the same, are discoverable, and may be sued for and recovered by a protestant discoverer.

This discoverer, so vested with this property, is enabled to find it out by every mode of inquisition, and to sue for it with every kind of privilege; not only the courts of law are open to him, but he may enter, and this is the usual method, into either of the courts of equity; he may bring bills against the parties, whom he suspects to be possessed of this forbidden property, against those whom he suspects to be their trustees, and against those whom he suspects to be privy to the transaction, and oblige them, upon oath, under the guilt and penalties of perjury, to disclose the exact nature, and just value, of their estates and trusts, in all the particulars, in order to effect their forfeiture.—In such suits, the informer is not liable to the delays, which the ordinary procedure of those courts throws into the way of the most equitable claimant; nor has the papist the indulgence, which they allow to the most fraudulent defendant, that of plea and demurrer; the defendant is obliged to *answer* the whole directly upon oath, and the old rule of "extending benefit and restraining penalty," is by this law struck out of the Irish jurisprudence, and the contrary rule is established, directing, that, upon all doubts, these penal laws should be construed in the largest and the most liberal sense against the defendant.

Until the 2d of May, 1782, papists were incapable to purchase from *protestant* or *papist*, any *rents* or *profits* out of.

or annuity chargeable on any lands, tenements or hereditaments, and at this day no papist is capable to buy or purchase from *protestant or papist any rents or profits* out of lands, tenements or hereditaments, in *such manor or borough*, or take any *annuity*, chargeable on *such lands, tenements or hereditaments*;—and all securities whatsoever for the securing of any *such annuity* are void; and any judgment had on such annuity, so far as such judgment may affect *such lands*, is also void.

In respect to the leases taken by papists, under the powers granted by the 17th and 18th Geo. 3. ch. 40., it is to be observed, that those leases, if taken at any time within the first of August and first of November 1788, were liable to be charged with maintenance and portion for the children of a popish parent possessed of the same, if a bill grounded on the 2d Anne, ch. 6, was filed for that purpose before the first of November, 1778; but if no such bill was filed before the first of November, 1778, such leases, so previously taken, and in the actual possession of the papist on that day, ceased to be liable to such charges. It must also be observed, as to those leases taken by papists under the powers granted by the 17th and 18th Geo. 3. ch. 49, that if taken at any time after the 1st of November 1778, and before the 2d of May 1782, (or since, if of lands in such beforementioned manors or boroughs) they were, and do now continue to be, liable to be charged with such maintenance and portion.—As to leases of any lands, tenements or hereditaments, (save in such beforementioned manors or boroughs,) taken by papists after the 1st of May 1782, they are within the provision of the statute of the 21st and 22d Geo. 3. ch. 24, “which enables papists, upon making as aforesaid the oath and declaration beforementioned, to take and dispose of lands, tenements and hereditaments, and any interest therein, as fully and beneficially as other subjects may,” and are, therefore, not liable to such charges.

To conclude our observations on the subject of *real* property, we have only to take notice, that the law directs that *debts and incumbrances* affecting the *real* estates of *papists*, shall, within six months, be enrolled in the court of exchequer, in some public office belonging to and appointed by such court for that purpose, and that in default of such enrollment, such

debts and incumbrances shall not charge the *lands* in the hands of a *protestant*.—The *auditor-general's office* is the place appointed for that purpose by the court of exchequer.—The intent of this law was to prevent *pocket incumbrances* only—*judgments* are of sufficient notoriety, and, it is decided, that they are not within the view of the legislature, and that copies of them need not be enrolled in the auditor-general's office.

ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY.—Whatever effect the relaxing laws may have had upon *real estates* and *chattels real*, the *goods* and *personal chattels* have not been affected by those laws in any respect, save that no maintenance or portion can be granted out of such property to any child of a popish parent, upon a bill filed against such parent, pursuant to the 2d *Anne*, ch. 6; in other respects, the penalties of the law affecting such property, remain as they did before the relaxing laws were passed.

If the *wife* of a papist conforms in his life time, she shall, if she survives him, and be unprovided for by dower, or by some settlement on his *real estate*, receive such proportion of the *goods* and *personal chattels* whereof he shall die possessed or intitled unto, as the court of chancery, on a bill to be preferred by her, grounded on the 8th *Anne*, ch. 3. may think reasonable, not exceeding one *third* part after debts and funeral expences, notwithstanding any will or voluntary disposition by him to the contrary, or the *statute of distributions*.—The legislature, in this instance, has presumed, that the husband omitted to make provision, for no other reason than that of her religion.—If, therefore, a wife chooses to balance any domestic misdemeanors to her husband, by the public merit of conformity to the protestant religion, the law will suffer no proofs of such misdemeanors to be brought to invalidate its presumption; she acquires a provision, totally independent of the favour of her husband, and this in a great degree deprives him of that source of domestic authority, which the common law has left in families, that of rewarding or punishing, by a voluntary distribution of his effects, what in the opinion of the husband, was the good or ill behaviour of his wife. And yet it is to be observed, that though the law meant a favour to the conforming wife, yet, by a strange inaccuracy, in repealing as to her the provisions of the *statute of distributions*, it has deprived her of an advantage, to which

she would have been intitled under that statute, in case her husband died intestate and without issue; as in such case, by that statute, she would be intitled, as against his collateral relations, to a *moiety* of the clear surplus of his *personal* estate, after payment of debts and funeral expences.

The *child* of a papist, on conforming to the protestant religion, may file a bill in chancery, grounded on the statute of the 8th *Anne*, ch. 3, against the parent, and compel such parent, by the process of that court, to confess, upon oath, the quantity and value of the *goods and personal chattels* of such parent, over and above debts contracted *bonâ fide* for valuable consideration before the conformity.—Upon this conformity, the court is empowered to seize upon and allocate for the *immediate maintenance* of such child, any sum not exceeding one *third* of the said *goods and personal chattels*.—This *third*, as we said, for *immediate maintenance*; but as to *future establishment* upon the death of the parent, no limits whatsoever are assigned by the statute; the chancellor may, if he thinks fit, take the whole of such property, money, stock in trade or agriculture, out of the hands of the possessor, and secure it in any manner he may think expedient for that purpose, the act not having any sort of limit with regard to the quantity of property which is to be so charged, nor having given any sort of direction concerning the means of charging or securing it.—But the policy of the legislature was not yet exhausted, because there was a possibility, that the parent, though sworn, and otherwise compellable, might by *false representations* evade the discovery of the ultimate value of *such* property on the *first* bill; new bills may be brought at any time, by any, or by all the children, for a further discovery.—*Such* property of the parent is to undergo a fresh scrutiny, and in consequence of this scrutiny a new distribution is to be made; the parent can have no security against the vexation of reiterated chancery suits, and continual dissection of *such* his property, but by doing what must be confessed is somewhat difficult to human feelings, by fully and without reserve abandoning *such* property (which may be his *whole*) to be disposed of at the discretion of such a court, in favour of such children.—Is this enough; and has the parent purchased his repose, by the total surrender for once of *such* effects? Very far from it: the law very express

and carefully provides that he shall not; for as in the former case, a *concealment* of any part of *such* effects is made the equitable ground of a *new* bill—so here any *encrease* of them is made a second ground of equity; for the children are authorised, if they can find that their parent has, by his industry or otherwise, acquired any property since their first bill, to bring others compelling a fresh account, and another distribution of the increased substance, proportioned to its value at the time that the new bill is preferred.—They may bring such bills toties quoties, upon every improvement of *such* property by the parent, without any sort of limitation of time, of the number of such bills, or the quantity of encrease in the estate, which may justify the bringing them; in short, the law has provided, by a multiplicity of regulations, that the parent shall have no respite from the persecution of his children, but by totally abandoning not only all his present *goods and personal chattels*, but every hope of encrease and improvement of *such* property.—It is very well worth remarking, that the law has purposely avoided to determine any age for these emancipating conversions; so that the children, at any age, however in all other respects incapable of choice, however immature, or even infantine, are yet considered as sufficiently capable of disinheriting their parents, if we may be allowed the expression, and to subtract themselves from their direction and controul. By this part of the law, the value of Roman Catholics in their *goods and personal chattels*, is rendered extremely limited, and altogether precarious, the paternal authority in such families undermined, and love and gratitude, dependence and protection, almost extinguished.

FRANCHISES.—There only remains upon our plan, to say something concerning *franchises*.

No person shall hold any *ecclesiastical office* or *employment*, without making a *declaration* against *transubstantiation*, at the times and places, and in the manner prescribed by the law.

No person, without making a *declaration* against *transubstantiation* and *receiving the sacrament according to the church of Ireland* at the times and places and in the manner prescribed by the law, shall hold any *office* or *employment*, *civil* or *military*, except the office of high constable, overseer

of the poor, church-warden, surveyor of the highways, or any like inferior civil office, or the office of forester or keeper of a park, chase, warren, game, or bailiff of a manor of lands, or any like private office.—The office or employment is void, and the penalty for executing it, a disability to sue in law or equity, to be guardian, executor or administrator, to take a legacy or deed of gift, or to bear any office, and a forfeiture of £500.

Papists are not entitled to vote at *vestries*, (held for other purposes than *paving* and *lighting*,) unless they happen to be the church-wardens, in which case they vote, except for the *repairing and building of churches*.

Papists are not to be *parochial watchmen* in times of *tumult and danger*—the lord lieutenant, the judge of such times, may, when he shall judge necessary, issue proclamations for the finding of protestants, and none other, to be *parochial watch*.

Though *papists* may, by taking and subscribing the oath of allegiance prescribed by the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. c. 35, *qualify* to be called to the bar, yet they are expressly excluded from being *king's council*.

And though *papists* may in like manner qualify to be *attorney, solicitor, or notary*, yet to be an *advocate, proctor, or six clerk*, the necessity of a *declaration* against *transubstantiation* still remains.

No person shall be capable of acting as a *sub-sheriff* or *sheriff's clerk*, who has not been a *protestant* for *five years* immediately before such acting, under penalty of being subject to such disabilities as *papists* are.

No *peer, or member of the house of peers*, shall vote or make his proxy in such house, or sit there during any debate, nor shall *any member of the house of commons* vote or sit in the house of commons, during any debate after the speaker is chosen, until such peer or member shall take and subscribe the *declaration* against *transubstantiation*. The penalty is a disability to hold or execute any office ecclesiastical, civil or military, to sit or vote in either house of parliament, or make a proxy in the house of lords, to sue in law or equity, to be guardian, executor or administrator, or to take any legacy or deed of gift, and a forfeiture of £500.

No *papist* is intitled to vote at the *election of any member*

to serve in parliament, or at the election of any magistrate for any city or other town corporate.

No *papist* shall serve on, or be returned to serve on, any *grand jury*, unless it shall appear to the court, that a sufficient number of protestants cannot be had for that service.

In *all trials of issues* on any of the *popery laws*, the *prosecutor* or *plaintiff* may challenge any *papist* returned as juror to try the same.

And in *actions between protestants and papists*, challenge of a *papist* returned as a juror, shall be allowed.

No *papist* shall serve as a *juror* upon trials for *enlisting persons in foreign service*.

Papists to serve on *juries* must have £10 per annum, clear freehold except in counties of cities and towns.

King's and university professorships of physic are not open to *papists*.

Persons *apprenticed*, under the direction of *authorized establishments for education*, are invariably to be apprenticed to *protestants*.

No *six clerk, officer or deputy-officer* of any of the four courts, or of any court of record, ecclesiastical or admiralty, shall take any *papist* to be *apprentice* or *clerk*.

The importance of this publication was duly appreciated by the Catholic Committee, who voted £500 to its author, the Hon. Simon Butler. Its effects, and the successful exertions of these societies, in removing the prejudices of the Northerns, became evident at the ensuing celebration of the French Revolution, by the volunteers and inhabitants of Belfast. The objects to be proposed to this meeting, having been the subjects of a year's general and public discussion, were perfectly well understood. These were, to express a decided approbation of the French Revolution, and to adopt its principles, as far as they were applicable to Ireland, through the means of parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation.

The assembly consisted not only of the volunteers and inhabitants of the town and vicinity of Belfast, but of a very considerable number of distant volunteer companies, together with a great concourse from a wide circuit of the north. A number of principal catholics and others from Dublin, attended this meeting by previous agreement, that they might witness the spirit with which the dissenters were animated.

The day's proceedings commenced by a review of the volunteer corps, after which they returned to town, and commenced a grand procession through the principal streets, bearing standards, with appropriate devices and mottoes, and proceeded to Linen-hall street, where the whole fired three feude-joye, and then entered the White Linen-hall, where a chair was raised in the centre of the area, round which the volunteers and principal inhabitants assembled. John Crawford, Esq. reviewing-general, having been called to preside, Mr. Sinclair rose: he said he was deputed to propose two addresses to the assembly for their consideration; one to the National Assembly of France, the other to the People of Ireland. Infamous calumnies, he said, had gone abroad relative to them, which had been industriously circulated by interested men, but which he would not take up the time of the Assembly to refute. The papers, themselves, when read, would save him that trouble; and he would venture to say there was not an individual present, who claimed the noble title of a freeman, that would hesitate in giving his approbation.

To the National Assembly of France.

It is not from vanity or ostentation, that we, the citizens of Belfast, and citizen-soldiers of that town and neighbourhood, take the liberty of addressing the representative majesty of the French people.—We address you, with the rational respect due to a title elevated far above all servile and idolatrous adulation, and with that affectionate fraternity of heart which ought to unite man to man, in a mutual and inseparable union of interests, of duties, and of rights; which ought to unite nation with nation, into one great republic of the world.

On a day, sanctified as this has been, by a declaration of human rights, the germ of so much good to mankind, we meet with joy together, and wish well to France, to her National Assembly, to her People, to her Armies, and to her King.

May you, legislators, maintain, by the indefatigable spirit of liberty, that constitution, which has been planned by the wisdom of your predecessors, and never may you weary in the work you have undertaken, until you can proclaim with triumphant security, it is finished! Manifest to an attentive and progressive world, that it is not the phrenzy of philosophy, nor the fever of wild and precarious liberty, which could produce such continued agitation, but that imperishable spirit of freedom alone, which always exists in the hearts of man, which now animates the heart of Europe, and which, in the event, will communicate its energy throughout the world, invincible and immortal!

We rejoice, in the sincerity of our souls, that this creative spirit animates the whole mass of mind in France. We auspicate happiness and glory to the human race, from every great event which calls into activity the whole vigour of the whole community; amplifies so largely, the field of enterprize and improvement, and gives free scope to the universal soul of the Empire. We trust that you will never submit the liberties of France to any other guarantees than God, and the right hands of the People.

The power that presumes to modify or to arbitrate with respect to a constitution adopted by the people, is an Usurper and a Despot, whether it be the meanest of the mob, or the ruler of empires; and if you condescend to negociate the

alteration of a comma in your Constitutional Code, France, from that moment, is a slave. Impudent Despots of Europe! Is it not enough to crush human nature beneath your feet at home, that you thus come abroad to disturb the domestic settlements of the nations around you, and put in motion your armies, those enormous masses of human machinery, to beat down every attempt that man makes for his own happiness? It is high time to turn these dreadful engines against their inventors, and, organized as they hitherto have been, for the misery of mankind, to make them *now* the instruments of its glory and its renovation.

Success, therefore, attend the ARMIES of France!

May your soldiers, with whom war is not a trade, but a duty, remember, that they do not fight merely for themselves, but that they are the advance guard of the world: nor let them imagine, that the event of the war is uncertain. A single battle may be precarious, not so a few campaigns.—There is an omnipotence in a righteous cause, which masters the pretended mutability of human affairs, and fixes the supposed inconsistency of fortune. If you will be free, YOU MUST; there is not a chance that one million of resolute men can be enslaved; no power on earth is able to do it; and will the God of justice and of mercy?—Soldiers! there is something that fights for you, even in the hearts of your enemies. The native energies of humanity rise up in voluntary array against tyrannical and preposterous prejudice, and all the little cabals of the heart give way to the feelings of nature, of country, and of kind.

Freedom and prosperity to the PEOPLE OF FRANCE! We think, that such revolutions as they have accomplished, are so far from being out of the order of society, that they sprung *inevitably* from the nature of man, and the progression of reason; what is imperfect, he has the power to improve; what he has created, he has a right to destroy. It is a rash opposition to the irresistible will of the public, that, in some instances, has maddened a disposition, otherwise mild and magnanimous, turned energy into ferocity, and the generous and gallant spirit of the French into fury and vengeance. We trust that every effort they now make, every hardship they undergo, every drop of blood they shed, will render their constitution more dear to them.

Long life and happiness to the KING of the FRENCH! not the Lord of its soil and its servile appendages, but the King of Men, who can preserve their rights while they entrust their powers. In this crisis of his fate, may he withstand every attempt to estrange him from the Nation; to make him an exile in the midst of France, and to prevent him from identifying himself as a Magistrate with the Constitution, and as a Frenchman with the People.

We beseech you all as Men, as Legislators, as Citizens, and as Soldiers, in this your great conflict for liberty, for France, and for the world, to despise all earthly danger, to look up to God, and to connect your Councils, your Arms, and your Empire to his Throne, with a chain of union, fortitude, perseverance, morality and religion.

We conclude with this fervent prayer: that as the Almighty is dispersing the political clouds, which have hitherto darkened our hemisphere, all Nations may use the Light of Heaven: that, as in this latter age, the Creator is unfolding in his creatures, powers which had long lain latent—they may exert them in the establishment of universal freedom, harmony and peace: may those who are free, never be slaves! may those who are slaves, be speedily free!

To the People of Ireland.

We, the volunteers and other inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Belfast, assembled to commemorate this great day, embrace with earnestness the opportunity which it affords, at once to express our zeal and affection for the cause of liberty in France, and our undisguised opinions on subjects of the last importance to our native land.

Trained from our infancy in a love of Freedom, and an abhorrence of Tyranny, we congratulate our brethren of France, and ourselves, that the infamous conspiracy of Slaves and Despots, against the happiness and glory of that admired and respected nation, and against the common rights of man, has hitherto proved abortive.

Fixing our view steadily on the great principle of Gallic emancipation, we will not be diverted from that magnificent object, by the accidental tumults or momentary ebullitions of popular fury; we will not estimate the wisdom of her legi-

slators, by the transports of a mob; nor the spirit of her armies, by the cowardice of a regiment; nor the patriotism of her people, by the treachery of individuals; nor the justice of her cause, by the number of her enemies. We judge with other views, and on other principles.—We see, with admiration, France extending the land-marks of human knowledge in the great art of government, and opening to the world new systems of policy and of justice. We see her renounce all wars on the principle of conquest. We see her propose an universal brotherhood, and an eternal peace, among the nations. We see her, even now, when forced into arms and bloodshed, by the unjust and unprincipled machinations of her enemies, separating, as far as possible, the innocent subjects from the guilty despot; respecting, amidst the horrors of war, the property of individuals; and exempting from interruption, the peaceful traffic of the merchant. It is from views like these, that we estimate that stupendous event, the Revolution, which we daily commemorate; not from accidental irregularities, which, while we condemn them, we are compelled to pity, as feeling that they spring not merely from a spirit of licentiousness, but from a sense of injury working on a sanguine people, still galled with the recollection of recent tyranny and oppression, and jealous of liberty, but just recovered, and scarcely yet secure.

Such are our sentiments on the subject of the French Revolution;—we come now to the state of our own country.

Impressed as we are with a deep sense of the excellence of our constitution, as it exists in *theory*, we rejoice that we are not, like our brethren in France, reduced to the hard necessity of tearing up inveterate abuse by the roots, even where utility was so intermixed as to admit of separation.

Ours is an easier and a less displeasing task; to remove with a steady and a temperate resolution, the abuses, which the lapse of many years, inattention and supineness in the great body of the people, and unremitting vigilance in their rulers to invade and plunder them of their rights, have suffered to overgrow and to deform that beautiful system of government, so admirably suited to our situation, our habits, and our wishes. We have not to innovate, but to restore. The just prerogatives of our Monarch we respect, and will maintain. The constitutional power of the Peers of the realm,

we wish not to invade. We know, that in the exercise of both, abuses have grown up; but we also know, that those abuses will be at once corrected, so as never again to recur, by restoring to us, THE PEOPLE, what we, for ourselves, *demand as our right*, our due weight and influence in that estate, *which is our property*, the REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE IN PARLIAMENT.

Thoroughly impressed with the unjust and ruinous inequality of that representation, with the consequent corruption, which pervades all ranks in the state; with the destruction of the morals, the sacrifice of the commerce, and the hourly and imminent danger to the liberty of the country, we will inflexibly persevere in the pursuit of that great remedy for all our political evil, a parliamentary reform; a reform temperate, equal, just, which shall restore lustre to the Crown, dignity to the Peerage, and their due weight and influence to the People of Ireland.

But while we thus state our sentiments on the subject of reform, we feel it incumbent upon us to declare, as we now do, that no reform, were even such attainable, would answer our ideas of utility or justice, which should not equally include all sects and denominations of Irishmen. We reprobate and abhor the idea, that political inequality should result from religious opinions; and we should be ashamed, at the moment when we are seeking liberty for ourselves, to acquiesce in any system founded on the slavery of others.

We have now declared our sentiments to the world.—In declaring them we spurn, with equal disdain, restraint, whether proceeding from a mob or a monarch; from a riot or a proclamation.

We look with a mixture of abomination and contempt, on the transactions, which, on the last anniversary of the French Revolution, degraded the national character of England; when neither the learning, the piety, the public spirit, nor the private nature of a Priestley, could protect him from the savage fury of the vilest of an ignorant and bigotted rabble, before whom the religion of the country was dishonoured, the name of the Sovereign insulted, and all law and order levelled in the dust, to the disgrace, not less of the integrity of the magistrates, who were the fomenters, than of the spirit of the people, who were timid witnesses of the ravage and destruction.

As little should we respect any attempt, under colour of authority, to fetter down our minds, or prevent the publication of our grievances, and our determination to seek redress.

In the pursuit of reform, that great measure, indispensable to the freedom, the happiness, and the glory of our country, we will inflexibly persevere, and for its attainment we rely with confidence on the steadiness, the public spirit, and the zealous co-operation of our countrymen.

These addresses were carried with acclamation. A collateral resolution, in favour of admitting the Catholics to the rights of citizenship, on the preceding 14th of July, was withdrawn, from an apprehension that the minds of those present were not yet fully prepared for it; but now, such was the rapid progress of the spirit of religious liberty, the idea, that political inequality should result from religious opinions, was reprobated and abhorred, and a declaration issued, not to acquiesce in any system founded on the slavery of others. A banquet, songs and toasts, concluded this last Belfast commemoration of the French Revolution; the greatest harmony prevailed, and the meeting separated, satisfied as to the present, and sanguine as to the future issue of the popular exertions.

In order to counteract the effects of the grand jury resolutions, a great number of meetings of different towns and districts, were likewise held throughout the province of Ulster, during the winter of 1792. At all of them it was declared, that a radical reform in the representation of the people, was the only remedy for the many existing grievances. Some few, with Londonderry at their head, expressed themselves as favourable to

the gradual admission of the catholics into this basis of reform; but the great majority followed the example of Belfast, and declared for the immediate and unqualified extension of the right of suffrage to the whole catholic body.

These declarations, from different assemblies, having testified some slight disagreement on one of the great questions, it was proposed to call a convention of the province, as had twice before been done, and on one occasion marked with success. Dungannon, the former place of meeting, and even the fifteenth of February, its anniversary, were deemed auspicious, and were therefore selected. It was also judged fit, that the delegates should be appointed on the plan then pursuing by the catholics.

The volunteer corps were at this time continuing to increase, and extend rapidly through the north. In Belfast, particularly, a very numerous town-meeting was held, and attended by even the most moderate and opulent inhabitants. Resolutions were there passed, urging, in the strongest manner, a complete re-establishment of the volunteer institution, and determining to form a military fund.

New military associations were also forming, even in Dublin, unequivocally avowing republican principles, by their emblematic devices, a harp without a crown, surmounted by a cap of liberty. These were to be armed and habited in green uniforms, and they stiled themselves, after the volunteer militia of France, National Guards. Their first muster in Dublin, was to have taken

place in the middle of December. Government appeared alarmed; false rumours of conspiracies and assassinations were circulated; an insurrection was said immediately to take place. It was reported from the Castle, that the first places to be attacked were, the custom-house, the post-office, and the gaol of Newgate; and that the signal of insurrection was to be, the pulling down of the statue of king William with ropes! Additional troops were marched into Dublin; field-pieces were annexed to each battalion; troops of cavalry, accompanied by magistrates, patrolled the streets every night; and on the 8th of December, a proclamation appeared, stating, that “ill-affected persons have entered into illegal and seditious associations, in the county and city of Dublin, to withstand lawful authority, and violently and forcibly to redress pretended grievances, and to subvert the established constitution of this his Majesty’s realm; and with a view to carry into effect these their seditious purposes, have, by colour of laudable associations heretofore formed in this kingdom by his Majesty’s loyal subjects, for repelling foreign invasion and maintaining peace and good order, publicly declared their intention to appear in arms to avow their approbation of tumult and disorder, and to encourage the citizens of Dublin to follow their evil example, and have also conspired together to raise, levy and muster, within the county and city of Dublin, a number of armed men, to parade in military array, with various devices, and ensigns of disaffection to his Majesty and the constitution,

and have actually ordered uniforms and accoutrements to be made and provided for such persons as they shall be enabled to seduce from their allegiance, to enter into the said illegal associations; and whereas these dangerous and seditious proceedings tend to the disturbance of the public peace, the obstruction of good order and government, the great injury of public credit, and the subversion of the constitution, and have raised great alarms in the minds of his Majesty's loyal subjects. Now, we, the lord lieutenant and council, being determined to maintain the public peace, against all attempts to disturb the same, and being desirous to forewarn all such persons as might unadvisedly incur the penalties of the law in this behalf, by concurring in practices of a tendency so dangerous and alarming, do hereby strictly charge all persons whomsoever, on their allegiance to his Majesty, to abstain from committing such offences. And we do charge and command the lord mayor, magistrates, sheriffs, bailiffs, and other peace officers within the county and city of Dublin respectively, to be careful in preserving the peace within the same, and to disperse all seditious and unlawful assemblies; and, if they shall be resisted, to apprehend the offenders, that they may be dealt with according to law." This had the expected effect. Republicanism had not taken root in the capital: the National Guards, conscious of wanting public support, did not muster; a few appeared in the streets, and three at the appointed parade, Rowan, Tandy, and Carey; shortly after, the uniforms prepared for

it were seized, and this new military association extinguished.

This, however, did not prevent an attempt to re-embody the old volunteer corps, now nominally existing, who had been favourably alluded to in the proclamation. For this purpose, on the 14th, the following Address was issued by the United Irishmen of Dublin. This became the subject of a criminal prosecution: an ex-officio information was filed against the secretary; after a trial of ten hours, on the 29th of January, 1794, Mr. Rowan was found guilty, and sentenced to pay a fine of £500, to be imprisoned two years, and until the fine was paid, and to give security for his good behaviour for seven years, himself in £2000, and two sureties in £1000 each.

The Society of United Irishmen at Dublin, to the Volunteers of Ireland, William Drennan, Chairman, Archibald Hamilton Rowan, Secretary.

Citizen soldiers,

You first took up arms to protect your country from foreign enemies and from domestic disturbance. For the same purposes, it now becomes necessary that you should resume them. A proclamation has been issued in England, for embodying the militia, and a proclamation has been issued by the lord lieutenant and council in Ireland, for repressing all *seditions* associations. In consequence of both these proclamations, it is reasonable to apprehend danger from abroad, and danger at home. From whence but from apprehended danger are those menacing preparations for war drawn through the streets of this capital, or whence, if not to *create* that internal commotion which was not *found*, to shake that credit which was not *affected*, to blast that volunteer honour which was hitherto *inviolable*, are those terrible suggestions, and rumours, and whispers, that meet us at every corner, and agitate at least our old men, our women and children. What-

ever be the motive, or from whatever quarter it arises, alarm has arisen, and you, VOLUNTEERS OF IRELAND, are therefore summoned *to arms* at the instance of government, as well as by the responsibility attached to your character, and the permanent obligations of your institution. We will not, at this day, condescend to quote authorities for the *right* of having and of using arms, but we will cry aloud, even amidst the storm raised by the witchcraft of a proclamation, that to your *formation* was owing the peace and protection of this island, to your *relaxation* has been owing its relapse into impotence and insignificance, to your *renovation* must be owing its future freedom and its present tranquillity. You are therefore summoned to arms, in order to preserve your country in that guarded quiet, which may secure it from external hostility, and to maintain that internal regimen throughout the land, which, superseding a notorious police or a suspected militia, may preserve the blessings of peace by a vigilant preparation for war.

Citizen soldiers, to arms! Take up the shield of freedom, and the pledges of peace—peace, the motive and end of your virtuous institution. War, an occasional duty, ought never to be made an occupation. Every man should become a soldier in the defence of his rights; no man ought to continue a soldier for offending the rights of others. The sacrifice of life in the service of our country is a duty much too honourable to be entrusted to mercenaries, and at this time, when your country has by public authority been declared in danger, we conjure you by your interest, your duty, and your glory, to stand to your arms, and in spite of a police, in spite of a fencible militia, in virtue of two proclamations, to maintain good order in your vicinage, and tranquillity in Ireland. It is only by the military array of men in whom they confide, whom they have been accustomed to revere as the guardians of domestic peace, the protectors of their liberties and lives, that the present agitation of the people can be stilled, that tumult and licentiousness can be repressed, obedience secured to existing law, and a calm confidence diffused through the public mind in the speedy resurrection of a free constitution, of *liberty* and of *equality*,—words which we use for an opportunity of repelling calumny, and of saying, that, by liberty we never understood unlimited freedom, nor by equality the

levelling of property, or the destruction of subordination.—This is a calumny invented by that faction, or that gang, which misrepresents the king to the people, and the people to the king, traduces one half of the nation, to cajole the other, and by keeping up distrust and division, wishes to continue the proud arbitrators of the fortune and fate of Ireland.—Liberty is the exercise of all our rights, natural and political, secured to us and our posterity by a real representation of the people;—and *equality is the extension of the constituent, to the fullest dimensions of the constitution, of the elective franchise to the whole body of the people*, to the end that government, which is collective power, may be guided by collective will, and that legislation may originate from public reason, keep pace with public improvement, and terminate in public happiness. If our constitution be imperfect, nothing but a reform in representation will rectify its abuses; if it be perfect, nothing but the same reform will perpetuate its blessings.

We now address you as Citizens, for to be Citizens you became Soldiers, *nor can we help wishing that all soldiers, partaking the passions and interest of the people, would remember that they were once citizens, that seduction made them soldiers,—“but nature made them men.”* We address you without any authority, save that of reason, and if we obtain the coincidence of public opinion, it is neither by force nor stratagem, for we have no power to terrify, no artifice to cajole, no fund to seduce.—Here we sit,—without mace or beadle, neither a mystery, nor a craft, nor a corporation. In four words lies all our power,—UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION and REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATURE; *yet we are confident, that on the pivot of this principle, a convention,—still less—a society,—less still, a single man, would be able, first to move and then to raise the world.* We, therefore, wish for catholic emancipation without any modification, but still we consider this necessary enfranchisement as merely the portal to the temple of national freedom. Wide as this entrance is, wide enough to admit three millions—it is narrow, when compared to the capacity and comprehension of our beloved principle, which takes in every individual of the Irish nation, casts an equal eye over the whole island, embraces all that think, and feels for all that

suffer. The catholic cause is subordinate to our cause, and included in it, for, as UNITED IRISHMEN, we adhere to no sect, but to society, to no creed but christianity, to no party, but the whole people.—In the sincerity of our souls, do we desire catholic emancipation, but *were it obtained to-morrow, to-morrow would we go on, as we do to-day, in the pursuit of that reform, which would still be wanting to ratify their liberties as well as our own.*

For both these purposes, it appears necessary that provincial conventions should assemble preparatory to the convention of the protestant people. The Delegates of the catholic body are not justified in communicating with individuals, or even bodies of inferior authority, and therefore an assembly of a similar nature and organization, is necessary to establish an intercourse of sentiment, an uniformity of conduct, an united cause, and an united nation. If a convention on the one part does not soon follow, and is not soon connected with that on the other, the common cause will split into the partial interest; the people will relax into inattention and inertness; the union of affection and exertion will dissolve, and too probably some local insurrection, instigated by the malignity of our common enemy, may commit the character and risque the tranquillity of the island, which can be obviated only by the influence of an assembly, arising from, assimilated with the people, and whose spirit may be as it were knit with the soul of the nation,—unless the sense of the protestant people be on their part as fairly collected and as judiciously directed, unless individual exertion consolidates into collective strength, unless the particles unite into mass, we may perhaps serve some person, or some party for a little, but the public not at all. The nation is neither insolent nor rebellious nor seditious. While it knows its rights it is unwilling to manifest its powers. *It would rather supplicate administration to anticipate revolution by a well timed reform, and to save their country in mercy to themselves.*

The 15th of February approaches, a day ever memorable in the annals of this country as the birth-day of new Ireland—Let parochial meetings be held as soon as possible. Let each parish return delegates. Let the sense of Ulster be again declared from Dungannon on a day auspicious to union, peace and freedom, and the spirit of the north will again become

the spirit of the nation. The civil assembly ought to claim the attendance of the military associations, and we have addressed you citizen soldiers, on this subject, from the belief that your body, uniting conviction with zeal, and zeal with activity, may have much influence over our countrymen, your relations and friends. We offer only a general outline to the public, and meaning to address Ireland, we presume not at present to fill up the plan or pre-occupy the mode of its execution. We have thought it our duty to speak: answer us by actions; you have taken time for consideration. Fourteen long years are elapsed since the rise of your associations, and in 1782 did you imagine that in 1792 this nation would still remain unrepresented? How many nations in this interval have gotten the start of Ireland! How many of our countrymen have sunk into the grave!—*January 25, 1793.*

The immediate approval and adoption of the principles of this address, by the remnants of the Dublin Volunteer corps; and some symptoms of rejoicing they had manifested, at the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, and the battle of Jemappe; and the aristocratic rage, then prevalent, against French principles, afforded the favourable opportunity for dispersing them, and introducing in their place, another description of men, new-modelled and armed, under the novel name of yeomanry. The experiment was tried on the Goldsmith's corps. Previous to their hour of assembling, at their usual parade, in St. Michael-a-Pole's, Ship-street, on the 27th, a body of foot entered the Castle from the Barrack, two pieces of cannon were prepared in the ordnance-yard, and a company of the Royal Irish Artillery. The Volunteers, as soon as they had mustered, were surrounded by horse and foot; the magistrate entered, and ordered them to lay down their arms. The order was obeyed. Their arms were

piled on the parade, thence conveyed to the Castle, and the members dismissed, through the ranks of the military, to their respective homes. This completed the dissolution of the Independent Irish Volunteers, once the pride, the ornament, and the bulwark of Ireland, and the admiration of surrounding nations!

The important session of 1793 commenced on the 10th of January, with the following speech from the throne.

My Lords and Gentlemen, I have his Majesty's commands to meet you in parliament, and to express his satisfaction in resorting to your councils in the present situation of affairs.

“His Majesty feels the utmost concern that various attempts should have been made to excite a spirit of discontent and disturbance, and that appearances should have manifested themselves in any part of this kingdom, of a design to effect, by violence, an alteration in the constitution.

It is an additional ground of uneasiness to his Majesty, that views of conquest and dominion should have incited France to interfere with the government of other countries, and to adopt measures with regard to his Majesty's allies, the States-General, neither conformable to the law of nations, nor the positive stipulations of existing treaties, especially when both his Majesty and the States-General had observed the strictest neutrality with regard to the affairs of France.

Under these circumstances, I have ordered, by his Majesty's commands, an augmentation of the forces upon this establishment.

By the advice of the privy-council, measures have been taken to prevent the exportation of corn, provisions, and naval stores, arms and ammunition. The circumstances which rendered these measures necessary, will, I trust, justify any temporary infringement of the laws, and will induce you to give them a parliamentary sanction.

It will afford his Majesty the greatest satisfaction, if, by a temperate and firm conduct, the blessings of peace can be continued; but he feels assured of your zealous concurrence in his determination to provide for the security and interests

of his dominions, and to fulfil those positive engagements to which he is equally bound by the honour of his crown and the general interests of the empire.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons, I have ordered the national accounts to be laid before you, and I have no doubt of your readiness to grant such supplies for the public service, as the honour and security of his Majesty's crown and government, and the exigencies of the times, may require.

My Lords and Gentlemen, the agriculture, the manufactures, and particularly the linen manufacture, the protestant charter-schools, and other public institutions, which have so repeatedly been the objects of your care, will, I doubt not, engage your accustomed regard and liberality.

"I am to recommend to you, in his Majesty's name, to adopt such measures as may be most advisable for the maintenance of internal tranquillity; and, for this purpose, to render more effectual the law for establishing a militia in this kingdom.

His Majesty has the fullest confidence that you will, on all occasions, show your firm determination to enforce due obedience to the laws, and to maintain the authority of government, in which you may depend upon his Majesty's cordial co-operation and support: and I have it in particular command from his Majesty, to recommend it to you to apply yourselves to the consideration of such measures as may be most likely to strengthen and cement a general union of sentiment among all classes and descriptions of his Majesty's subjects in support of the established constitution; with this view, his Majesty trusts that the situation of his Majesty's Catholic subjects will engage your serious attention, and, in the consideration of this subject, he relies on the wisdom and liberality of his parliament.

I am truly sensible of the repeated testimony which I have received of your approbation, and I will endeavour to merit a continuance of your good opinion, by strenuously exerting the power, with which I am entrusted, for the maintenance of our excellent constitution in church and state, as the best security for the liberty of the subject, and the prosperity of Ireland.

The sentiments of the earl of Westmeath, on

moving the usual address, clearly pourtray the aristocratic feelings, not only of Ireland, but of Europe. “In times like these,” said he, “when a considerable portion of Europe is desolated and destroyed by the wild speculations and wicked exertions of desperate and designing enthusiasts, who, not satisfied with making their own country the theatre of anarchy, murder, famine, and desolation, are endeavouring to spread the flagitious effects of their abominable and impracticable doctrines to other countries; who, not content with deluging their own land with the blood of their fellow-citizens, are straining every nerve to destroy the peace, to disturb the harmony of surrounding nations, and to carry the devastation of fire and sword, throughout all the kingdoms of the earth; who regardless of all laws divine and human, have with an impious and sacrilegious hand, torn the crown from off the head of the mildest monarch that ever swayed the French sceptre; and as if the murder of their Sovereign and his family were insufficient to allay their inordinate thirst for Royal blood, have publicly—but I hope vainly sworn—the annihilation of all Kings.

In times like these, my lords, I say, it is peculiarly incumbent upon all who prefer loyalty to rebellion, religion to atheism, industry to idleness, and real liberty to the most abject slavery that ever vilified or disgraced mankind, to unite in the most ardent effusions of loyalty to his majesty, and the most strenuous exertions in defence of the constitution. The insidious and desperate

attempts of busy incendiaries have not been left untried in Ireland; but, I trust, my lords, that the manly and decided conduct of our present chief governor, for whose continuance in the government we cannot be too thankful to his majesty, seconded by the united efforts of all who love and venerate the constitution, will teach those factious and seditious meddlers, that it is in vain they attempt to tamper with the loyalty, or shake the fidelity of the Irish nation; and if yet there should exist within the land any man or set of men, so desperate as to wish to subvert the constitution under which they live, that the law has the power to reach them and to devote them to that punishment which such crimes so well deserve. It is needless for me to expatiate on the peculiar felicity which we all enjoy in being governed by a prince whose objects are the prosperity and happiness of all his people; his public and private virtues are too strongly written in our hearts to make a repetition of them necessary, but if any thing could increase our veneration for him, or add to the many proofs we have experienced of his parental care of his people, it would be the gracious recommendation which he has given to his parliament, in the speech from the throne, to strengthen and cement the union of all classes and descriptions of our fellow-subjects, and to consider the wishes of our Roman Catholic brethren with wisdom and liberality. I trust, my lords, that the loyalty and moderation of that body will prove them well worthy his majesty's goodness and the liberality of parlia-

ment; and I sincerely wish that the parliament may, by gratifying all moderate and reasonable wishes of so considerable and so loyal a portion of the community, disappoint the factious views, and frustrate the machinations of those whose object is popular commotion, for the purpose of reducing all orders and distinctions in society to the level of their own insignificance. He concluded with moving an address echoing the speech.

The lord chancellor alone differed from these sentiments with respect to the Catholics, accusing them of having deceived the Sovereign, by a petition fraught with falsehood and exaggeration; entering into a history of the penal laws, he endeavoured to justify their enactment, and prove his assertions. The Catholics immediately rebutted this charge, and republished their petition with notes, specifying the statutes, sections and clauses, on which the alleged falsehoods and misrepresentations were grounded, and distributed copies of it to the members of both houses of parliament. This refutation appears to have been conclusive, as his lordship did not attempt to reply to it.

In the commons, the effects of his majesty's recommendation were not less apparent. The leading features were, favour to the Catholics, and hostility to the reformers. Mr. Grattan, moving an amendment to the address, sketched with his usual ability, the present state of the country. "Our situation," said he, "is certainly alarming, but by no means surprising—it is the

necessary, natural and obvious result of the conduct of his majesty's ministers; the persons who had opposed our liberty in 82, were made our ministers—afterwards the country forgave them, but they never forgave the country; they attempted to put down the constitution, and now they have put down the government. We told them so—we admonished them—we told them that their driving system would not do—we had no objection to their private characters, or their humble, natural relationships of life, but that they were absolutely, totally, radically, disqualified to govern.

Don't they remember in 90 we warned them.—They said we were severe—I am sure we were prophetic—again in 91 we repeated our admonition—told them, that a government of clerks would not do—that a government by rank majorities would not do—that the government of the treasury would not do—that Ireland would not be long governed by the trade of parliament. We mentioned this when lord Buckingham ran away from this kingdom, and lord Westmoreland succeeded in his offices. We told them that a nation who had rescued her liberties from the giant of old England, in 82, would not long bear to be trodden on by the violence of a few pigmies whom the caprice of a court had appointed ministers.

I remember the beginning of the last session, I had the honour of submitting to this house some observations on this head; and my honourable friend also, in the course of the session, as-

sured you, that your system of government was infatuation; we have now to lament the effects of that infatuation, and though I allow foreign revolutions have had a certain effect on domestic discontent, yet the causes of that discontent were laid by ministers who might have seen the state of foreign politics, and have foreseen the forcible influence of that state on domestic disorders. We are now, by a course of mal-administration, brought back to that condition of discontent and jealousy, which in 82 produced an interposition from the king; we then laboured under the ill effects of a bad constitution—we now labour under the ill effects of a bad government.

The periodical sales of the house of commons, the public declaration of those sales, the increase of twenty parliamentary provisions, and what was more, the acknowledgment that such increase was a political expedient to buy the members; the repeated declarations that the best minister for Ireland was, he who bought the house of commons cheapest—the sale of divers peerages, for money to be laid out by the minister in procuring for his followers seats in the house of commons; the sale of the functions in one house, for buying votes in the other, as was the case of the barrenland bill; the patronage of all kind of abuses and peculations, as in the case of the police—the rejection of every constitutional bill, place bill, pension bill—responsibility tending to assimilate our constitution to that of Great Britain. The arguments advanced for the rejection of the two former, by a law officer of the crown, who said,

that the government in Ireland should be stronger than that of Great Britain, and who, in the application of that argument, could only mean that the parliament of Ireland should be more abandoned. These things and many more, taken separately, or altogether, have totally, and universally, deprived of all weight, authority, or credit, the parliament of Ireland.

I am sure our ministers meant to go no further; they only meant an attack on the constitution, but they have undermined the throne; it is impossible in a constitution with parts connected as ours, to put down the authority of parliament, without involving the monarchy; and while our ministers only intended to free the throne from the checks and limits of a parliament, they have deprived it of its best support, the poise and authority of a parliamentary constitution.

Permit me to consider the conduct of our ministers, in its particular reference to that oppressed part of his majesty's subjects—the Catholics. I don't mean now to go into their claims. I retain my former conviction in their favour, but if I were their enemy I could not approve of their treatment; our ministry begins by offering them a personal incivility, so they state in their published debate. I am not a judge of the fact, but they are of the impression. They were so critically and equivocally situated with respect to political and civil rank, that even courtesy from a lord lieutenant's secretary would have been a compliment, and slight is an insult: they

are the only part of his majesty's subjects so situated—the Catholics will soon be in that situation no longer—after offending the Catholics by manner, the next unadvised step of the ministry, was, to attack them by artifice, and accordingly they endeavoured to detach and divide the landed interests of the Catholics from the body at large, which was an attempt to destroy the subordination of the common people, and to set population adrift from the influence of property, and lest there should remain still some influence over their minds, the ministry make some blind and imperfect overtures to the Catholic clergy, to detach them also from the claims of their flock, which was to detach their flocks from them and to leave that flock entirely destitute of all principle whatsoever of subordination either to landlord or ecclesiastic. I am not a friend to superstition or subjugation, and yet there is a certain degree of moral influence, which the pastor may safely have over his flock, and the landlord over his tenantry, without which I fear you would extinguish the soul of subordination—however, the minister endeavours to leave the Catholic, over whom the state cannot have by connection any ascendancy, free from any controul or check, either of the church or their own aristocracy—and it is a strong presumption in favour of that body, thus set adrift as it were by design, that it recovered the principles of union, and has preserved the principles of subordination, and should have left its enemies without even a pretence to oppress them. The next im-

politic step taken by our minister was the institution of a paper war on the subject of religion—the declarations as you will find in the Catholic report of the transaction—managed, procured or sanctioned by government, led to counter declaration, and finally discussion at large, on the broad principle of philosophy, which ministry knew was against them, and in an appeal to the people who, from interest, must have been against them likewise: the ministry embitter this paper war, by its own rhetoricians and scribblers, and publish notoriously from the castle such personal invectives against respectable Catholics, such contumelious stuff! You must recollect it, written, published, and spread by the Castle, against the pretensions and persons of the Catholic body; such invectives as must have roused the spirit of indignation as well as liberty, to vindicate their fame and fortunes against a scandalous and opprobrious government.

The next unfortunate error in this business was, a declaration from a right honourable gentleman, high in confidence, that on a certain event government would suppress the Catholics with the force of both countries. I incline to believe the threat was unauthorised; nor do I pretend to say it was unconditional; it was on a certain event, or supposition, that these men committed something which government might call a great offence; but who had a right to suppose such a body of men would commit an act which will justify his majesty's ministers to levy war on so vast a portion of his people—a liege subject, liv-

ing within the peace of the king, to suppose him a rebel in order to threaten him with arms, is to tell him he is not a subject, but a slave. Without discussing any further objections to such language, it is sufficient to say, that the direct and obvious tendency of such a menace was to make the Catholic body attribute to the successes of France that safety and privilege which should have appeared to proceed from benignity of the king, and the justice of parliament. I say the tendency of such a declaration; but the effect of it has been, I believe, only to manifest his majesty's gracious and signal interposition in manifesting his paternal love to his loyal subjects, and affording them protection against his ministers.

The next unfortunate error of our ministry was their interference with grand juries against the Catholics, because they were giving the protestants false hopes, at the same time that they were exciting against the Catholics false fears. They took the lead in fomenting a religious war—they began it—they acted in the mongrel capacity of country gentlemen and ministers—they acted against Catholics as country gentlemen, and encouraged the protestants as ministers. They had, I understand, informed the British ministry, that the influence of the crown could not induce a majority to vote against the Catholic pretensions, and then they themselves take a leading part to make that difficulty in the country, of which they complained of, in their dispatches. To the country gentlemen they say, will you bear that

these men shall get the elective franchise, and to the British minister, you see these country gentlemen, and the consequences of this conduct is, that the Irish ministry become parties against the people, and have a personal and country interest to exclude them, not as Catholics but as enemies.

Among other instances of the intolerance of ministers, is something of a religious war in an address from the corporation of Dublin to the other corporations of the kingdom. I consider this publication as the act of the Castle—the act of their city delegation—the composition of their city agents. The city has been a long time the object of their mischief; whenever the city is left to herself, she will ever speak with moderation and propriety,—and her mistake in this address has been, to have resigned her better understanding to the intrigues and interference of the Castle. I shall observe on this publication so far as to say, that, according to the sentence it pronounces, the doom of the catholic, in all times to come, is perpetual exclusion from the franchise of the constitution; and, according to the law that publication advances the title of the protestant to his lands and privileges—is the right of conquest.—If then the three millions of Catholics should, with the assistance of twenty-six millions in France, rebel and dispossess you of your properties and charters, they have in the city publications an authority—they have the law of conquest—and they have your excuse for appealing to the law of conquest, because they have the sentence of the corporation—nothing

else to relieve them from the doom of slavery!

The result of this interposition of the Irish government in this religious war—the consequence of having poured their angry ingredients into the cup of religious fury, has been, that as far as relates to Irish government, they have totally lost the confidence of the catholics—they have lost the confidence of one part of his majesty's subjects by their corruption, and of the other, by their intolerance.

In such a situation of domestic discontent and foreign revolution, what measures have they taken?" After enumerating the measures adopted, and denying their efficacy, he recommended two remedies; "first," said he, "settle the great question with your Catholic brethren; settle it on principles of liberty, of unanimity, and of extensive freedom.

What is the other remedy? It is a word you will find in the books. The lawyer peruses the description daily. It is a parliament; a free and independent parliament, chosen by the people. Whether the people have that at present, I need not debate; but I repeat it, the radical cure is a free and independent parliament, chosen by the people.

I shall amend the address—that part of it which relates to his majesty is cold and impolitic; his interposition to heal our religious animosities, is an act of distinguished wisdom—as such it should be marked, particularly at a time when attempts have been made on the thrones of princes—at such a time I would mark to the Catholics

the king as the deliverer of his people. I would distinguish him from his ministers. I would mark that monarch, who had rescued his people from the hands of those ministers,—that, however we may abhor their proceedings, we shall, if necessary, unite, to rally in support of the throne, keeping pure of leaning to any French politics, or any wishes in favour of that nation, now on the eve of a war with a country, with whom we are by the crown, by the law, by interest, and by every political tie, for ever to be connected.

I move you, that an amendment be made, by inserting after the word “ constitution,” the following words: “ We admire the wisdom which at so critical a season has prompted your majesty to come forward to take a leading part in healing the animosities of your people on account of religion; we shall take into our immediate consideration the subject graciously recommended from the throne; and at a time when doctrines pernicious to freedom and dangerous to monarchical government are propagated in foreign countries, we shall not fail to impress your majesty’s Catholic subjects with a sense of the singular and eternal obligations they owe to the throne, and to your majesty’s royal person and family.”

The secretary of state, Mr. Hobart, replied, although the right honourable gentleman has been pleased to express in strong terms his disapprobation of the conduct of this house, I should not think it respectful to the gentlemen who compose it, for me to enter into their justification.

With regard to that part of his speech which concerns me personally, and particularly with regard to my treatment of the Catholics, I must observe that he has mentioned that the impression he received was conveyed to him from the publication of the debates in William-street—

Mr. Grattan—interrupting—I did not say he had done so, but that they had accused him of having done so; for I was not a judge of the fact, though they were of the expression.

I am happy, resumed Mr. Hobart, that the right honourable gentleman has called upon me, as it affords me an opportunity of explaining my conduct with regard to the Catholics, and I trust the gentlemen of this house will do me the justice to believe, that I am incapable of treating any description of his majesty's subjects with disrespect.—When the Catholics in the session of 1790, applied to me on the subject of the petition, they desired to have it supported in parliament, I certainly gave them no encouragement, because I did not consider myself warranted in so doing, but if my declining to hold out expectations of relief at that time was any proof of disrespect, I am inclined to believe that the right honourable gentleman was equally guilty of it; and I know, that although they applied to many other members of this house to present their petition, not one was found who would comply with their wishes. Subsequent to this period, a relaxation of the popery laws passed in Great Britain, and expectations were then entertained, that similar measures might be adopted here;

with that view I had communications with several of the Catholics, and I did then recommend it most strenuously to them, to adopt a conciliating line of conduct, as the only ground upon which they could hope for indulgence from parliament. Whether this advice was likely to forward their objects, I leave to the house to judge; but I must explicitly say, that the opinion I gave was not to any particular description of the Catholics, but to all, as I could prove to the right honourable gentleman, by naming them to him—which I was ready to do. Was this conduct pursued by me with a desire to sow discontent?—No; it was with the best intentions towards their interests.—What dispatches the right honourable gentleman may allude to, I cannot possibly know; nor shall I act so inconsistently with my duty as to discuss the lord lieutenant's dispatches here—but I may venture to say, that if he had last year represented to the British ministers that the house of commons would not then grant the elective franchise, he would not have made a false representation. As to the grand juries, I am not to defend the conduct of others; but I must say, after what has fallen from the right honourable gentleman, with respect to the manifesto of the metropolis, that I approved of it as little as he seems to have done.—In reply to the charge of our not having called the parliament at an early period, when that measure had been resorted to by Great Britain, I must state to the right honourable gentleman, that having called out a part of the militia at an unusual season, the

parliament was bound to meet under the statute, in fourteen days. Had parliament been summoned here at a shorter notice than twenty-five days, I believe it would have given rise to much disapprobation.—As to French emissaries, I do not believe there are any here at present, although their doctrines have been industriously disseminated, and I should apprehend that the aliens bill may drive many of them to this country.

Before the embargo was laid, parliament had been called, therefore the right honourable gentleman's charge upon that head is removed. The privy council sat twice upon the subject; the first time in consequence of applications from merchants of Cork and Waterford, declaring an apprehension of scarcity; upon examining into the fact, it was found that there was no cause to apprehend scarcity, consequently no embargo was laid; but in a fortnight after, advice from the English ministers, whose situations gave them the best opportunities of judging of the imperial concerns of the empire, declared the probability of a French war, and suggested the expediency of this measure.—Another cause of complaint against ministers is, that when Mr. Edward Byrne summoned his convention, they did not summon parliament. I only appeal to gentlemen, whether they would have thought it decent in ministers to have called parliament together at an unusual period, for such a cause? As to the amendment, he would say, that from all that part which affords expressions of gratitude and attachment to the king, it would ill become him

to dissent; but the Roman Catholic question being an object of great importance, he never would be inclined to take upon a sudden any determination relative to it. Let it be well weighed, and he had no doubt that the decision which would follow would be such as so great and important a subject required, and conformable to the general interests of the kingdom.

The Attorney General said, as it was a matter of great importance to the welfare of the kingdom that the address should pass unanimously, he would, if he might be permitted, take the liberty of requesting the right honourable gentleman to withdraw the amendment for the present, and move it upon the report to-morrow, as by that time he might, perhaps, think proper to alter some expressions in it, which at present made it unacceptable. It was, he repeated, of infinite importance that parliament should act with unanimity at the present crisis: the question was not now whether ministers were good or bad, qualified or unqualified, but whether parliament would set the example to all ranks of honest men to unite against sedition, and in support of the constitution, to unite against all attempts, foreign and domestic, to rally round the throne; and if it must fall—to fall with it. Allow me, said he, to state to the house, that there is a degree of sedition in the north of this kingdom, so audacious as publicly to speak of the necessity of putting down kings, and the very name of royalty. Gentlemen complain of the supineness of government; what would they have said, had they seen

a thousand ruffians, taken from the very lowest of the people, armed and bearing ensigns of disloyalty through the metropolis? a harp without a crown, a bloody dagger plunged in a reeking heart; yet this would have been the case, had not the vigilance and firmness of government prevented them.

Those who endeavoured to excite this sedition, did it under a pretence of redressing grievances, and reforming the constitution; but let no man presume to say he will attempt to reform the constitution by force of arms; if any does, let the united voice of parliament tell him, we are not to be intimidated—tell him, that we will defend the constitution, and, if it must perish, we will perish with it.

We are assured, said he, and we hear it with indignation, that jacobin clubs are formed in this country, upon the model of those in France; but how must it shock religion and humanity, to see sedition carried even to greater excess; to see ministers of the gospel preaching the bloody principles of French reformation, from those pulpits erected for teaching the mild and benevolent doctrines of Christianity. It is proceedings such as these, that have sunk public credit; that have obstructed trade; that have left the labourer and artisan without employment; and, through them, if not checked and controlled by the unanimous voice of parliament, the nation will soon return to the poverty and distress from which, for some years, it has been rapidly emerging.

The part of the speech, which recommends

attention to the situation of the Roman Catholics, had his most hearty approbation; and he hoped whatever should be done might be so done, as to promote union of sentiment amongst all his Majesty's subjects.

After some further debate, Mr. Grattan withdrew his amendment.

Four days afterward the question of reform was introduced by Mr. Ponsonby, and supported by Mr. Conolly. After some observations thereon, Mr. Grattan moved, "that a committee be appointed to enquire whether any, and what abuses have taken place in the constitution of this country, or the administration of its government, and to report such temperate measures as may appear most likely to redress the same." The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that though the question of parliamentary reform had been postponed in England, he did not disapprove of its introduction here, attended as it was, with propriety, temperance and decorum... Whenever the subject was brought forward, they would enter fairly into its merits, and whatever the decision might be, he trusted that it should procure strength to the constitution and that tranquillity to the nation, which were so much desired. The right hon. W. B. Conyngham considered, that parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation ought to go together, and a trial be made, whether a great reform might not be made in the constitution; and promised the gentlemen pledged every assistance in his power. Lord Kingsborough was happy to see two such respectable gentlemen the

originators of the measure, whose support it formerly had not: whenever brought forward, it should have his warmest approbation. Mr. M. Beresford said, the resolution, as it now stands, shall have my decided negative...I voted against a parliamentary reform in 1783, when a bill had been attempted to be obtruded on parliament by an armed convention; and perhaps I will again vote against it, if any ready-made plan should be dictated by a similar association; but I never voted against the principle of a parliamentary reform, and I declare that I never will. My only doubt is, whether we should proceed on the subject by committee, or by commissioners chosen from ourselves, to investigate the business, and to make a report. The latter mode would not be so speedy, but it would be much more effectual. The opposition arrogated too much to themselves, if they thought that the want of their place, pension, and responsibility-bills, had caused the disturbances in the country. They were produced by far different causes. The people were only unanimous in the demand of a parliamentary reform. It was the pen of Paine, and the sword of Dumourier, that had carried confusion into Great Britain and Ireland. The discussion of parliamentary reform will, I hope, be conducted with such temper, as to render it effectual. I trust, also, that all things will be forgotten; that there will be a general amnesty; that no persons will be questioned how they have obtained their seats, or others how they have transferred their influence. The measure would tend more than any

thing else to quiet the country. I hope to see all legislators employed upon the subject; for if it was adopted in one country, it must in the other.

Sir Lawrence Parsons.—If ever there was an occasion when truth and reason alone should dictate to every man who speaks, it is the present. Our oldest members tell you, that they never remember so awful a crisis for Ireland. For my part, I have thought with the deepest anxiety, both by night and by day, upon the present state of this country, and the result of my reflections is, that a reform in parliament is absolutely necessary to the very being of the state. When you are conferring favours on the catholics, do not neglect the protestants: let there be one great act, bearing freedom to the whole people; one great charter of liberty for all Ireland; one solemn covenant, in which we shall all be united, and in the attainment of which every sect and religion shall be interested; and let this be, a reform in parliament. If this crisis is favourable to liberty, shall it be wasted in merely giving liberty to catholics? No: give liberty at once to all Ireland, and this will be the most glorious era for your country, though it now appears the most awful. The Attorney-general pledged himself to a parliamentary reform, on no other principle than that of property.

Sir H. Cavendish.—Sir, I desire to know what a parliamentary reform is? I have read many books upon the subject, and have conversed with many persons, and yet none of them could give me a satisfactory answer to the question. All the

people, I declare, have it in their heads. A short time since I went into a shop, to buy an article of manufacture; I objected to the quality, and the answer the shopkeeper gave was, "Give us a parliamentary reform, and you shall have better." It was the common conversation in the streets; and the labourer cried to his fellow, "Paddy, we are going to be happy, they are going to give us a parliamentary reform." Men and women talked upon the subject, and children lisped out parliamentary reform. The first thing which they should determine was, who are to elect, and who to be elected; care should also be taken, that the house of commons should be composed of gentlemen. The Hon. Robert Stewart said, that, without the smallest disinclination to the catholic bill, but with every wish for its final success, it should be postponed, until the deliberations and determination on a parliamentary reform, that first and great object of all our electors, should be brought to a conclusion. The Hon. D. Browne had not a doubt, that the people of Ireland are not fully represented; but doubted the expediency of parliamentary reform at that time. In Leinster, Connaught and Munster, the situation of the catholics is complained of as a grievance; but this great body of the people confined themselves to complaints of their own situation; they have neither complaints to make of, or encomiums to lavish on, a constitution of which they have no part. Where then does this complaint come from? from the town of Belfast. What is the proceeding, and who are the people of that town, that

send us this measure? Military associations, that join with their schemes of reforming the constitution of Ireland, an approbation of the proceedings of France; that declare they will keep the constitution of king, lords and commons, provided they are not put to any trouble in settling those bodies in the manner most pleasing to themselves; if they are, they will dismiss them all; they call on every man, who cannot serve their cause, which they call the cause of this country, with his person, to forward it with his money. For this purpose, a military chest is established, for the declared purpose of buying arms and ammunition. In a very animated debate in that town, the Rev. Mr. Kilburn informs us, that lords are a grievance, and ought to be dismissed, because wisdom is not hereditary; that kings and lords ought to be dismissed; because they were two to one against the people; which proceedings ought to be reprobated by parliament.

Mr. Sheridan begged leave to say, that nothing less than a reform in the representation would restore peace to the country. Do we not all know, said he, in what manner many are brought into this house? are there not many among us, who could not find the way to the place they represent? who at times cannot recollect the name of it? I do not much relish anecdotes on serious subjects, but there is one, which is very true and apposite. By a curtesy of the house of commons in England, members of the Irish parliament are admitted to hear the debates; a friend of mine, then a member, wishing to avail himself of the privilege,

desired admittance; the door-keeper desired to know what place he represented—what place? why I am an Irish member! Oh, dear Sir, we are obliged to be extremely cautious, for a few days ago, Barrington, the pickpocket, passed as an Irish member. Why then, upon my soul, I forget the borough I represent, but if you get me Watson's Almanack I'll shew you.

Mr. Corry professed himself friendly to a reform, and moved the house to resolve, in lieu of Mr. Grattan's motion, "that this house will, on this day three weeks, resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to take into consideration the representation of the people." To this Mr. Grattan acceded, and it passed in the affirmative without a division.

The apparent sincerity with which ministers concurred in approving and discussing this measure, is one of the features of Pitt's machiavelian policy, who alternately wheedled the protestant ascendancy and the catholics, the friends to reform and the oligarchy, whispering one thing to one, the opposite thereof to another, until he agitated and convulsed the nation by his double-working policy, alternately acting on the hopes and fears of each adverse party, until his grand object, the union, was effected.

The expectations of the Irish, however, at this time, were very high, that the invaluable boon, parliamentary reform, would be conceded; as will be seen from the following Address from the Friends of the Constitution, Liberty and Peace, from their meeting at the King's-arms tavern,

Fownes's-street, the Duke of Leinster in the chair.

To the People of Ireland.

In the present eventful and auspicious crisis of affairs, we feel a sensible pleasure in offering our congratulations to our countrymen.

In our first address we declared it to be one of the peculiar excellencies of our constitution, "that its abuses might be corrected without violating its essence, or even slighting its forms."—The events now passing before our eyes, verify that tribute of applause, which we paid to the inherent virtue of our constitution.

The claims of three-fourths of the subjects of this country, supported by the wishes of the whole, have reached the throne. The monarch has announced himself the father of his people, by recognizing those claims, and he has anticipated your demand of a REFORM, by recommending to parliament the adoption of such measures, as might unite all his subjects in an attachment to the constitution of their country.

Under the influence of this benignant suggestion, even the body which is the object of Reform, has become the organ of its own reformation, without sedition, without violence, without disturbing public order, or convulsing public opinion; the faction, which affected to govern us, has been subdued, and rational and peaceful freedom is placed within our grasp. The wise and gracious interposition of our Sovereign has added a further sanction to the loyalty of Irishmen; it has forbidden the constitutional medium of political benefits to remain any longer closed against the people. The corrupt mist, which obtruded itself between us and our Sovereign, is now dispelled; the unconstitutional influence, which debauched the parliament from its constituents, is now for a moment dormant. We call on the Irish people to seize this fortunate crisis of unrestrained communication, and to state, in the free language of freemen, the nature and extent of their demands.

The intervention of the people to legislate, or by their own mere act to make, or to reform a constitution, is, we admit, the death of establishment, and we have already warned you against the miseries of anarchy. But the inter-

position of the people to declare their wishes to the legislature, is at all times their constitutional right, and when the question vibrates to the frame of the constitution itself, it becomes not only their right, but their exclusive interest, and their bounden duty. The proudest parliament must be pleased to learn the sentiments of the nation on any measure sincerely adopted to gratify the nation; and, if it were possible to conceive you indifferent to the success of such a measure as is now depending, the reproach of those who have said you are too corrupt to be free, might be considered as no calumny; and it would, perhaps, be the duty of a patriotic citizen, to diminish the operation of your vices, by circumscribing the sphere of your privileges. We cannot entertain so degrading a sentiment respecting our fellow-citizens; their temperate and firm exertions co-operating with the virtue, wisdom, and talents of their patriotic leaders, gave them a constitution. They have a right equally strong, and are called upon by a duty equally cogent, to protect and to reform that constitution. For the purpose, therefore, of empowering and stimulating the parliament, of instructing and admonishing the Irish government, and of manifesting to our Sovereign the loyalty and gratitude of his subjects,

We earnestly recommend it to you, to assemble in your respective counties, to declare your sense of the *necessity* of an *immediate, radical, and effectual reform* in the representation of—the people—to lay before the throne your gratitude for his Majesty's gracious interposition on behalf of his Catholic subjects, to state your acknowledgments for what has been done in parliament, and your anxious wish that it may proceed, *without intermission*, in accomplishing the great work it has undertaken. But, whilst we feel the utmost confidence in the affection and justice of our Sovereign, and whilst we place all due reliance on the wisdom and liberality of parliament, the public sentiment must not slumber.

We must give information to our real, and take away excuse from our pretended friends; we must strengthen the sincere, and animate the luke-warm; and, above all, we must deprecate half-measures: and let the government of this country know, that no *palliative* will be suffered to feed and keep alive the present morbid system of representation. We do again recommend the formation of societies, for the pur-

pose of investigation and conference. The difficulties of this arduous business will the less obstruct its progress, when the talents of the nation are every where exerted in surmounting them; and we doubt not, that the united exertions of the people of Ireland, will, even within this session, with the co-operation of parliament, accomplish Reform, which, for ages, may withstand the decay of time, and the inroads of corruption. Signed by order, &c. R. Griffith, Sec.

Even the peaceable free-masons, who studiously avoid political and religious controversy, yielded at this time to the sacred impulse of brotherly love and patriotism; as appears from the sentiments, truly evangelical, addressed by the lodge of Dungannon to all the masons in Ireland.

To the Free and Accepted Masons of Ireland.

Brethren—Affected only by the sacred influence of those holy bonds which unite us to you and our brethren encircling the globe, we address you. Reluctantly do we speak on political subjects. Convinced that “unanimity is the strength of society,” we view with abhorrence the insidious attempts that have been in our native land made, to introduce discord where harmony should reign, to call up the spirit of the first-born Cain, and make brother draw the murderous sword against brother: “divide and govern,” is a maxim as old as tyranny itself. We will not be divided as masons; for, holding sacred the right of private judgment in all matters whatever, the virtuous brother, however he may differ from us in religious or political opinions, shall ever be received with the cordial embrace of fraternal fellowship. We will not be divided from our countrymen; our interests are in common with theirs. Whilst we view with pleasure the rapid progress of liberty in France, supported by reason and philosophy, and founded on the grand principles of our institution; whilst we glory in the reflection, that our illustrious brother Washington, and the masons of America, were the saviours of

their country, and the first founders of the temple of liberty, are we to see the Irish masons made the tools of corruption, and they to be instruments for oppressing their already borne-down countrymen? Brethren, in embracing the duties of masons, we have not relinquished any of our rights as men; we are, from our souls, sincerely loyal; but ours is not the loyalty of slaves, it is that of masons; masons, who know their rights, and are determined to die or be free. We are no advocates for passive obedience and non-resistance; fealty to our Sovereign does not require us to support corruption. So long as the vices of man render government necessary, it ought to be framed for the good of nations, not for oppression to the many, and the aggrandizement of a few. Ah! how could any of you, whose benevolence should be as extensive as the habitations of man, behold two-thirds of your countrymen miserable, oppressed, and naked, literally feeding on potatoes and point, labouring under sanguinary penal laws, taxed without being represented, unable in sickness to procure assistance, obliged in herds annually to desert their hovels at the approaching ravages of the hearth-collectors, who, merciless, too often rob their bed of heath of its only covering. Could you behold these, and say, the people are happy, rich and prosperous? Could you behold almost the whole of what are called the nation's representatives, arbitrarily appointed by a few individuals, for a long number of years, and not accountable for their conduct; places and pensions multiplied for the purposes of corruption, and often bestowed on man without principle, and woman without virtue; the privileges of the crown infringed, the honours of the peerage sold, innumerable taxes wrung from the people, and the nation involved in debt for the purpose of corrupting parliament, no responsibility required from the great officers of the state, the subject deprived of the trial by jury, in consequence of the game and revenue laws, fiats and attachments? Could any of you, generous brethren, behold these and numerous other grievances, and declare yourselves enemies to those who will attempt to reform the system of iniquity which occasions them? We believe, that the people not having their due weight in the legislature, is the cause of all our grievances; and that a real, radical reform in the representative branch thereof, can alone secure the interest,

and preserve the peace of Ireland. To this object alone our views are directed; knowing that reform can alone prevent the horrors of a revolution, the blame of which must fall on the heads of those who drive the people to despair. Brethren, equally contemning the high and low vulgar, we are taught to regard him alone, who is virtuous, as exalted to the level of man. The profane and vicious are only savages; to be virtuous, it is necessary to be free, for slavery and vice are inseparably connected. Respecting those sacred truths, we wish we may be branded with infamy, if we ever cease most strenuously to co-operate with all our fellow-subjects in their endeavours to eradicate vice and slavery from the land. Taking our wives and children in our hands, we feel all nature stirring within us, and the God of nature's voice calling on us to save them. One word more, brethren, "a people aspiring to be free, should be able to protect liberty."—Be peaceable, but powerful. Let every lodge in the land become a company of citizen-soldiers. Let every volunteer company become a lodge of masons.

Countrymen of all denominations, we address you; our mysteries are not orgies held for plotting against your liberty. Among the apostles there was one Judas. The slaves among us are few: join our lodges; this will give you confidence in each other, and will secure you against private persecution on account of your struggles for freedom. No one who dares to oppress the least among us, need ever expect support from the rest.—Signed by order, W. Richardson, Sec.

An aggregate meeting of the freemen and freeholders of the city of Dublin was also convened by the high-sheriffs, on the 24th of January, to take into consideration the state of the representation, and give instructions to their representatives thereon. The resolutions adopted by this meeting, declared the house of commons not to be freely chosen by the people; and that, being influenced by emoluments and pensions, it did not speak the sense of the people. These resolutions having been published in the *Hibernian*

Journal, the printer, Mr. M'Donnell, was ordered to attend at the bar of the house of commons for a breach of privilege. When questioned as to his defence, he said the resolutions were sent to him authenticated under the signature of Henry Hutton, one of the high-sheriffs of the city; and that the sheriff had authorised him to say he had signed them, as chairman of the meeting, and was ready to avow the fact, if called upon. After a long debate, the printer was ordered into custody, where he was kept for a few days, and then discharged; but no notice was taken of the sheriff, who was attending, dressed in the insignia of his office, and ready to justify his conduct.

An address to the nation from the United Irishmen again appeared, accompanied with a plan of reform, recommending measures to insure its success, the formation of a national convention, &c. &c. The importance annexed to them, will be ample apology for their insertion.

The Society of United Irishmen of Dublin to the Irish Nation.—William Drennan, Chairman—Archibald Hamilton Rowan, Secretary.

On the 9th of November, 1791, was this Society founded. We and our beloved brethren of Belfast began that civic union, which, if a nation be a society united for mutual advantage, has made Ireland a nation; and, at a time when all wished, many willed, but few spoke, and fewer acted, we, Catholics and Protestants, joined our hands and our hearts together, sunk every distinctive appellation in the name of *Irishman*, and, in the presence of God, devoted ourselves to universal enfranchisement, and a real representation of all the people in parliament. On this rock of right our little ark found a resting place; gradually, though not slowly, throughout the country other stations of safety appeared, and

what before was agitated sea, became firm and fertile land. From that time have the body and spirit of our societies increased, until selfish corporations, sunk in conscious insignificance, have given way to a grand incorporation of the Irish people.

Knowing that what the tongue is to the man, the press is to the people; though nearly blasted in our cradle by the sorcery of solicitors of law and general attorneys, we have persisted with courageous perseverance to rally round this forlorn hope of freedom, and to maintain this citadel of the constitution at the risk of personal security, property, and all that was dear to us.

We have defended the violated liberty of the subject against the undefined and voracious privilege of the House of Commons, treating with merited scorn the insolent menaces of men inflated with office.

Not a man so low, that, if oppressed by any assumption of power, civil or military, has not met with our counsel, our purse and our protection; not a man so high, that, if acting contrary to popular right, or public independence, we have not denounced at the judgment-seat of justice, and at the equitable tribunal of public opinion.

We have addressed the Volunteers, deliverers of this injured land! Have we done wrong? If we have, tear your colours from the staff, reverse your arms, muffle your drums, beat a funeral-march for Ireland, and then abandon the corpse to fencibles, to militia, to invalids and dismounted dragoons. If we have done wrong, and we swear by the revolution of Eighty-two that we have not, go on with the zeal of enterprising virtue, and a sense of your own importance, to exercise that right of self-defence which belongs to the nation, and to infuse constitutional energy into the public will for the public good.

O Ireland! Ireland! country to which we have clung in all our misfortunes, personal, religious, political; for whose freedom and happiness we are here solemnly united; for whom, as a society, we live; and for whom, as men, if hard necessity commands it, we are ready to die; let us conjure you not to abuse the present precious moment, by a self-extinguishment, by a credulous committal of your judgment and senses to the direction of others, by an idle and idiot

gaze on what may be going on in parliament. In receiving good offices from all, distinguish between sound Hibernicism and that windy patriotism, which is now puffing and blowing in the race of popularity. *Trust as little to your friends as to your enemies, in a matter where you can act only by yourselves. The will of the nation must be declared before any reform ought to take place.* It is not, therefore, any class however numerous, any society however respectable, any subaltern assembly, that have either right or competency to express that authoritative will. *Nothing less than the people can speak for the people. This competency resides not in a few freeholders shivering in the corner of a county-hall, but only in the whole community, represented in each county, (as at present in Antrim,) by parochial delegation, and then from each county by baronial delegation, to provincial conventions, the union of which must form the awful will of the people of Ireland.* Let us therefore conclude, by conjuring the county meetings now assembling to follow the example of Ulster, and by appointing delegates to a convention of their respective provinces, to unite their scattered and insulated wills into one momentous mass, which may have authority sufficient to make a declaration of rights in behalf of the nation.

A Plan of an Equal Representation of the People of Ireland in the House of Commons, prepared for Public Consideration by the Society of United Irishmen of Dublin.

I. That the nation, for the purpose of representation solely, should be divided into three hundred electorates, formed by a combination of parishes, and as nearly as possible equal in point of population.

II. That each electorate should return one representative to parliament.

III. That each electorate should, for the convenience of carrying on the elections at the same time, be subdivided into a sufficient number of parts.

IV. That there should be a returning officer for each electorate, and a deputy returning officer for each subdivision, to be respectively elected.

V. That the electors of the electorate should vote, each in

the subdivision in which he is registered, and has resided as herein-after specified.

VI. That the returning officers of the subdivisions should severally return their respective polls to the returning officer of the electorate, who should tot up the whole, and return the person having a majority of votes, as the representative in parliament.

VII. That every man possessing the right of suffrage for a representative in parliament, should exercise it in his own person only.

VIII. That no person should have a right to vote in more than one electorate at the same election.

IX. *That every male of sound mind, who has attained the full age of twenty-one, and actually dwelt, or maintained a family-establishment in any electorate for six months of the twelve immediately previous to the commencement of the election, (provided his residence, or maintaining a family-establishment be duly registered,) should be entitled to vote for the representative of the electorate.*

X. That there should be a registering-officer, and a registry of residence, in every subdivision of the electorate; and that in all questions concerning residence, the registry should be considered as conclusive evidence.

XI. That all elections in the nation should commence and close on the same day.

XII. That the votes of all electors should be given by voice, and not by ballot.

XIII. That no oath of any kind should be taken by any elector.

XIV. That the full age of twenty-five years should be a necessary qualification to entitle any man to be a representative.

XV. That residence within the electorate should not, but that residence within the kingdom should be a necessary qualification for a representative.

XVI. *That no property qualification should be necessary to entitle any man to be a representative.*

XVII. That any person having a pension, or holding a place in the Executive or Judicial Departments, should be thereby disqualified from being a representative.

XVIII. *That representatives should receive a reasonable stipend for their services.*

XIX. That every representative should, on taking his seat, swear that neither he, nor any person to promote his interest, with his privity, gave, or was to give, any bribe for the suffrage of any voter.

XX. That any representative, convicted by a jury of having acted contrary to the substance of the above oath, should be for ever disqualified from sitting or voting in parliament.

XXI. *That parliaments should be annual.*

XXII. That a representative should be at liberty to resign his delegation, upon giving sufficient notice to his constituents.

XXIII. That absence from duty for should vacate the seat of a representative.

The Society of United Irishmen of Dublin to the People of Ireland.

People of Ireland—We now submit to your consideration a plan for your equal representation in the House of Commons. In framing it, we have disregarded the many overcharged accusations, which we hear daily made by the prejudiced and the corrupt against the People, their independence, integrity, and understanding. We are, ourselves, *but a portion of the People*; and that appellation, we feel, confers more real honour and importance, than can, in *these times*, be derived from places, pensions, or titles. As little have we consulted the sentiments of administration or of opposition. We have attentively observed them both, and, whatever we may hope of some members of the latter, *we firmly believe, that both those parties are equally averse from the measure of adequate reform. If we had no other reason for that opinion, the plan laid before parliament, in the last session, under the auspices of opposition, might convince us of the melancholy truth.* Thus circumstanced, then, distrusting all parties, we hold it the right and the duty of every man in the nation to examine, deliberate, and decide for himself on that important measure. *As a portion of the People*, (for in no other capacity, we again repeat it, do we presume to address you,) we suggest to you our ideas, by which we would provide to preserve the popular part of the legislature uninfluenced by, and independent of the other

two parts, and to effectuate that essential principle of justice and our constitution, that every man has the right of voting, through the medium of his representative, for the law by which he is bound: that sacred principle, for which America fought, and by which Ireland was emancipated from British Supremacy! If our ideas are right, which we feel an honest conviction they are, adopt them; if wrong, discussion will detect their errors, and *we, at least*, shall be always found ready to profit by, and conform ourselves to, the sentiments of the People.

Our present state of representation is charged with being unequal, unjust, and by no means calculated to express *your* deliberate will on any subject of general importance. We have endeavoured to point out the remedies of those evils, by a more equal distribution of political power and liberty, *by doing justice*, and by anxiously providing, that your deliberate will shall be, at all times, accurately expressed in your own branch of the legislature. If these are not the principles of good government, we have yet to learn, from the placemen and pensioners that flit about the Castle, in what the science of politics can consist. But we know they are; and, we are bold to say, that the more a government carries these principles into effect, the nearer it approaches to perfection.

We believe it will be said, that our plan, however just, is impracticable in the present state of this country. If any part of that impracticability should be supposed to result from the interested resistance of borough proprietors, although we never will consent to compromise the *public right*, yet we, for our parts, might not hesitate to purchase the *public peace* by an adequate compensation. At all events it rests with you, countrymen, not with us, to remove the objection. If you do not wish the accomplishment of such a reform, it will not take place; if you do, we cannot believe, that Ireland is yet sunk to that state of misgovernment, in which it may be truly said, that although the great body of the people seriously feel the justice of a measure, and are seriously determined on its attainment, it is, nevertheless, impracticable.

To you, among our countrymen, for whose welfare we have peculiarly laboured from the first moment of our institution, and the contemplation of whose prosperity, will more

than compensate us for the sufferings we may have endured, for the calumnies with which we are aspersed, and for those which the publication of this unpalatable plan will call down upon us: *to you, the poorer classes of the community, we now address ourselves.* We are told you are ignorant; we wish you to enjoy liberty, without which no people was ever enlightened. We are told you are uneducated and immoral; we wish you to be educated, and your morality improved, by the most rapid of all instructors—a good government. *Do you find yourselves sunk in poverty and wretchedness? Are you over-loaded with burdens you are but little able to bear? Do you feel many grievances, which it would be tedious, and might be unsafe to mention? Believe us, they can all be redressed by such a reform, as will give you your just proportion of influence in the legislature, AND BY SUCH A MEASURE ONLY.*—To that, therefore, we wish to rivet all your attention. Let those men, who wrangle about preserving or acquiring power, catch at popularity by their petty regulations to check the progress of these growing evils; do you deliberate, in the retirement of your hearts, upon their only adequate remedy. Desist, we entreat you, from those disturbances, which are a disgrace to your country, and an injury to yourselves; which impair your own strength, and impede your own cause. *Examine peaceably and attentively, the plan of reform we now submit to you. Consider does it propose to do YOU justice? Does it propose to give YOU sufficient protection?* for we have no fears but that the rich will have justice done to them, and will be always sufficiently protected. *Hang this plan up in your cabbins; think on it over and over again; do not throw it by in despair, as being impossible to be carried into effect, FOR NOTHING, WE HOPE, IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT IS JUST.*—January 25, 1793.

The existence of war with France was shortly after announced. Messages from the lord lieutenant, on the 13th of February, acquainted parliament, that war was declared against his Majesty and Holland, by the assembly then exercising the powers of government in France; that he had taken the necessary steps to maintain the honor

of his crown, and the rights of his people; and that his Majesty relied on their firm and effectual support, and on the exertions of a brave and loyal people, in prosecuting a just and necessary war, &c. Addresses of the most zealous co-operation, were unanimously voted, in defence of his Majesty's crown and rights.

The provincial convention of Ulster assembled at Dungannon, on the 15th of February. Antrim, Down, Donegall, Londonderry, Monaghan and Tyrone, were fully represented, and the delegates chosen directly by the whole people; but several districts in Armagh, Cavan and Fermanagh, had failed to meet, or appoint delegates. After two days deliberation, this body came to a decision in favour of the absolute necessity of a radical reform, including the unqualified and immediate admission of the catholics. A resolution was also entered into, declaring, in very pointed terms, the protest of that province against the war with France; and another expressing disapprobation of the militia establishment, as tending to supersede the volunteers.

Meanwhile the catholics having found it necessary to make the extent of their wishes fully known to the Irish administration, the sub-committee deputed some of their body to wait on major Hobart, and acquaint him, that the object and expectations of the catholics were, the entire repeal of the popery laws. This declaration the secretary received with perfect politeness: but without implicating his responsibility by an indiscreet reply. Some days after, a second interview on the

same subject having been judged necessary, the sub-committee, feeling that it was called upon to be precise and specific, desired its deputies to read to Mr. Hobart, on its part, the same declaration reduced to writing. When this was accordingly done, Mr. Hobart addressed himself to Mr. Keogh, one of the deputation, and asked, did he not think, that if government went for the elective franchise, and the repeal of the catholic laws relating to juries, with some minor circumstances then stated, enough would be done.—Mr. Keogh replied, that as one of the deputation, he could only answer, it would not content the catholics, and that there he had no right to deliver any opinion. “But it is your private opinion I request to know?” rejoined the secretary.—“Why then,” said Mr. Keogh, “if I was to give my private opinion, I should say, they are substantial benefits.” “It is not in government’s power,” directly answered the minister, “to grant more.” Some vague discourse was then carried on with others of the deputation, as if it was possible to negotiate on the footing of partial emancipation. When this conversation was reported to the sub-committee, it was exceedingly irritated, and, hoping to retrieve what was past, instantly sent a new deputation, consisting of different members, to reiterate the declaration in stronger terms: but the secretary had taken his ground.

Accordingly on the 4th of February he obtained leave to bring in a bill, for giving to the catholics the elective franchise; the right of being grand and petty jurors in all cases; of en-

dowing a college and schools; of carrying arms, if possessed of a certain property qualification; of holding subordinate civil offices; and of being justices of the peace: it also repealed all the remaining penal laws respecting personal property.

The progress of this bill through parliament was by no means rapid. It was presented on the 18th, ordered to be printed, and read a second time on the 22d. On the second reading, Mr. Knox, after insisting that all apprehensions from catholic power must be unfounded, declared his intention to move, that Roman catholics should be admitted to seats in parliament. On the question for committal, the Provost declared, that if, in what he was going to say, he could effect the abolition of any one religious prejudice, he should consider it the happiest moment of his life. Then having combated the apprehensions entertained of the power of the Catholics, Protestants, he said, should not be any longer jealous or suspicious, as the causes of jealousy and suspicion were completely removed; the Roman catholics had, for a century, been uniformly loyal and peaceable; they had done nothing, under all the restraints laid upon them, to disturb the established government, and surely this conduct deserved some return. During fifty years experience that he had had of the confidence of those in the government of affairs in this kingdom, he never heard of any rising or intended rising amongst those people; for the excesses of the lower orders he did not consider as insurrection. Lord Chesterfield, when he came over here as lord-lieutenant, was much

prejudiced by what he had heard in England of Roman catholics; but when he came to converse with, and to observe them, he changed his opinion. The commons, on the alarm of a rebellion actually existing in England, wished to strengthen the hands of government by violent measures against Roman catholics; they were opposed by the immediate friends of government in that house; and when the lord lieutenant was urged, by representations of the dangers of popery, he declared that he “knew of but one dangerous papist in the whole country, a very beautiful young lady of that persuasion.” What could have inspired him with this confidence, but a retrospect of their conduct for fifty years before? He then took an historical review of the subject, insisting, that all the misfortunes of this country had arisen from the disunion of its inhabitants; that as soon as their nation had become united, all the great objects of liberty were attained; and that the emancipation of the catholic had always been the earnest of Irish liberty.

“I would have you,” said Mr. Grattan, at the conclusion of an animated appeal on behalf of the oppressed, “at this time, distrust that religious vanity, which tells you, that these men are not fit for freedom; they have answered that vanity in a strain of oratory peculiar to the oppressed. It is the error of sects, to value themselves more upon their differences than their religion; and in these differences, in which they forget the principles of their religions, they imagine they have discovered the mystery of their salvation; and to this sup-

posed discovery they have offered human sacrifices: what human sacrifices have we offered? the dearest, the liberties of our fellow-subjects. Distrust again that fallacious policy, which tells your power is advanced by their bondage; it is not your power, but your punishment; it is liberty without energy, you know it; it presents you with a monopoly, and the monopoly of others, not your own; it presents you with the image of a monster in a state when the heart gives no circulation, and the limbs receive no life; a nominal representative, and a nominal people: call not this your misfortune, it is your sentence, it is your execution. Never could the law of nature suffer one set of men to take away the liberty of another, and that of a numerous part of their people, without feeling a diminution of their own strength and freedom; but, in making laws on the subject of religion, we forget mankind, until their own distraction admonishes statesmen of two truths, the one, that there is a God; the other, that there is a people. Never was it permitted to any nation; they may perplex their understandings with various apologies, but never long was it permitted to exclude from essential, from what they themselves have pronounced essential blessings, a great portion of themselves for periods of time, and for no reason, or what is worse, for such reason as you have advanced. Conquerors, or tyrants proceeding from conquerors, have scarcely ever, for any length of time, governed by those partial disabilities; but a people so to govern itself, or rather, under the

name of government, so to exclude one another, the industrious, the opulent, the useful, that part that feeds you with its industry, and supplies you with its taxes, weaves that you may wear, and ploughs that you may eat; to exclude a body so useful, so numerous, and that for ever, and, in the mean time, to tax them ad libitum, and occasionally to pledge their lives and fortunes! For what? For their disfranchisement. It cannot be done. Continue it, and you expect from your laws what it were blasphemy to ask of your Maker. Such a policy always turns on the inventor, and bruises him under the stroke of the sceptre or the sword, or sinks him under the accumulation of debt, and loss of dominion. Need I go to instances? What was the case of Ireland, enslaved for a century, and withered and blasted with her protestant ascendancy, like a shattered oak, seethed on a hill by the fires of its own intolerance. What lost England America, but such a policy? An attempt to bind men by a parliament, wherein they are not represented; such an attempt as some would now continue to practise on the catholics, and involve England. What was it saved Ireland to England but the contrary policy? I have seen their principles of liberty very far by yourselves. I have heard addresses from counties and cities here, on the subject of the slaves, to Mr. Wilberforce, thanking him for his efforts to set free a distressed people. Has your pity traversed leagues of sea, to sit down by the black boy on the coast of Guinea; and have you forgot the man at home by your side, your

brother? Come, then, and by one great act cancel this code, and prepare your mind for that bright order of time, which now seems to touch your condition." The bill was then committed for the 25th, three only dissenting.

The hon. Mr. Knox, agreeable to the notice he had given, after showing how effectually his measure would counteract republican principles, moved "that the committee be empowered to receive a clause to make it lawful for persons professing the Roman catholic religion to sit and vote in parliament." This was seconded by major Doyle, supported by Mr. Blake, of Ardfry, and Mr. M. Smith, who briefly stated the inadequacy of the bill without this clause. "That only would be liberal, he said, which would make the catholics contented and happy; and that only it would be wise to grant, which might be granted with safety to ourselves. Liberality and wisdom, in this case, are coincident; for that only would be wise which should make the catholics happy; since their content was the essence of our safety. The bill, he was sorry to say, fell far short of the point of wisdom and of liberality. It granted the elective franchise, but it withheld the representative franchise; and by thus granting a part, and withholding a part, it neither satisfied the catholic desire, nor secured the protestant safety. It only holds the cup of liberty to their lips, then withdraws it, and tells them, we did not mean they should taste it. The man, who could say the catholics ought to be contented with the bill, knew little of the human heart, and felt nothing of its

finest energies. Liberty must be enjoyed in whole, not in part; she must shine with a full orb, and her least obscuration was scarcely less felt than her total eclipse. Every good is great or little from comparison; relative depression is, therefore, slavery—protestant ascendancy is catholic misery. What, then, it might be asked, did the catholics want? he would answer in one word—Liberty: what many of the most brilliant characters of antiquity had died for, and without which no honorable man would wish to live. He would be understood to mean, however, only that chastised liberty, which was founded on, and regulated by law; not that political mania, which had so strongly seized a neighbouring country, and produced there such melancholy effects. He refuted the assertion, that the catholics should be admitted to the elective franchise, agreeably to the principles of the constitution; but that they ought to be excluded from the senate. The constitution, he showed, required, that they should be admitted as well to the one as to the other. The duties of parliament required all the wisdom, all the talents, and all the integrity of the land; what then could be said of a law, which excluded three-fourths of that wisdom, integrity and ability, from the senate-house? He did not allude to their numbers by way of intimidation; it was an argument to their pity and to their justice, not to their fears. In a good cause, no number would be too great to contend with; but surely three millions of men were too, too many to be excluded from the benefits of freemen. If the

clause proposed was rejected, the bill would confer nothing but a *conge d'elire*, and would be alike insulting to the catholics and protestants. The house could not grant what would give union, if they did not grant all the privileges of the constitution. To assert they could, would be to contravene the first principles of reason; but let them place the catholics on equal ground with their fellow-subjects, and then nothing internal nor external could injure the peace or the security of the country. The adoption of the clause would raise the country to rank, splendour and dignity, among nations." This was more than the minister chose to effect: the detaching the catholics from the friends of reform, was the object of his concessions. The clause was resisted, and negatived by a majority of 96, 69 voting for it, and 163 against it.

In the debate of the 27th, the bill was violently opposed by the ascendancy phalanx, and several fruitless attempts made, to limit the elective franchise. On the 7th of March, the bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to the lords.

During its progress through the house of lords, few alterations were made in it; but the loyalty of the catholic body was acknowledged. Lord Portarlington said, he was one of the committee lately appointed by their lordships to enquire into certain alarming events of late prevalent in this country, and if he was not fully convinced, that the catholic body had no concern whatever in the disturbances created by some of their com-

munion in the north, he should never give to this bill the support he now gave it, by voting for its committal. On the 20th of March, the bill was read a third time, passed, and returned to the commons; and on the 9th of April received the royal assent. The state of the catholics since remaining unchanged, the perusal of this act will make the reader acquainted with the extent of the relief it conveyed, and the qualifications necessary for obtaining such relief.

“Whereas various acts of parliament have been passed, imposing on his Majesty’s subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion, many restraints and disabilities, to which other subjects of this realm are not liable; and from the peaceable and loyal demeanour of his Majesty’s Popish or Roman Catholic subjects, it is fit that such restraints and disabilities shall be discontinued: be it therefore enacted, by the king’s most excellent majesty, &c. that his Majesty’s subjects, being Papists, or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, or educating any of their children in that religion, shall not be liable or subject to any penalties, forfeitures, disabilities, or incapacities, or to any laws for the limitation, charging or discovering of their estates and property, real or personal, or touching the acquiring of property or securities effecting property; save such as his Majesty’s subjects of the Protestant religion are liable and subject to; and that such parts of all oaths as are required to be taken by persons in order to qualify themselves for voting at elections of members to serve in parliament; and also such parts of all oaths required to be taken by persons voting at elections for members to serve in parliament, as import to deny that the person taking the same is a Papist, or married to a Papist, or educates his children in the Popish religion, shall not hereafter be required to be taken by any voter, but shall be omitted by the person administering the same; and that it shall not be necessary, in order to entitle a Papist, or person professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, to vote at an election of members to serve in parliament, that he should at, or pre-

vious to his voting, take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, any statute now in force to the contrary of any of the said matters in any wise notwithstanding.

“ II. Provided always, and be it further enacted, that all Papists or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, who may claim to have a right of voting for members to serve in parliament, or of voting for magistrates in any city, town corporate, or borough, within this kingdom, be hereby required to perform all qualifications, registries, and other requisites, which are now required of his Majesty's Protestant subjects, in like cases, by any law or laws now of force in this kingdom, save and except such oaths and parts of oaths as are herein before excepted.

“ III. And provided always, that nothing herein before contained shall extend, or be construed to extend to repeal or alter any law or act of parliament now in force, by which certain qualifications are required to be performed by persons enjoying any offices or places of trust under his Majesty, his heirs and successors, other than as herein after is enacted.

“ IV. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend to give Papists, or persons professing the Popish religion, a right to vote at any parish vestry, for levying of money to rebuild or repair any parish church, or respecting the demising or disposal of the income of any estate belonging to any church or parish, or for the salary of the parish clerk, or at the election of any churchwarden.

“ V. Provided always, that nothing contained in this act shall extend to, or be construed to affect any action or suit now depending, which shall have been brought or instituted previous to the commencement of this session of parliament.

“ VI. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall extend to authorize any Papist, or person professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, to have or keep in his hands or possession, any arms, armour, ammunition, or any warlike stores, sword-blades, barrels, locks, or stocks of guns, or fire-arms, or to exempt such person from any forfeiture, or penalty inflicted by any act respecting arms, armour, or ammunition, in the hands or possession of any Papist, or respecting Papists having or keeping such warlike stores, save and except Papists, or persons of the Roman Catholic

religion, seized of a freehold estate of one hundred pounds a year, or possessed of a personal estate of one thousand pounds or upwards, who are hereby authorized to keep arms and ammunition as Protestants now by law may; and also, save and except Papists or Roman Catholics possessing a freehold estate of ten pounds yearly value, and less than one hundred pounds, or a personal estate of three hundred, and less than one thousand pounds, who shall have at the session of the peace in the county in which they reside, taken the oath of allegiance prescribed to be taken by an act passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his present Majesty's reign, entitled *An act to enable his Majesty's subjects, of whatever persuasion, to testify their allegiance to him*; and also in open court, swear and subscribe an affidavit, that they are possessed of a freehold estate, yielding a clear yearly profit to the person making the same, of ten pounds, or a personal property of three hundred pounds above his just debts, specifying therein the name and nature of such freehold, and nature of such personal property, which affidavits shall be carefully preserved by the clerk of the peace, who shall have for his trouble a fee of six-pence, and no more, for every such affidavit; and the person making such affidavits, and possessing such property, may keep and use such arms and ammunition as Protestants may, so long as they shall respectively possess a property of the annual value of ten pounds, and upwards, if freehold, or the value of three hundred pounds, if personal, any statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

“VII. And be it enacted, that it shall and may be lawful for Papists, or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, to hold, exercise, and enjoy all civil and military offices, or places of trust or profit under his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, in this kingdom; and to hold or take degrees, or any professorship in, or be masters, or fellows of any college, to be hereafter founded in this kingdom, provided that such college shall be a member of the University of Dublin, and shall not be founded exclusively for the education of Papists, or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, nor consist exclusively of masters, fellows, or other persons to be named or elected on the foundation of such college, being persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, or to hold any office or place of trust in,

and to be a member of any lay-body corporate, except the college of the holy and undivided Trinity of queen Elizabeth, near Dublin, without taking and subscribing the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, or abjuration, or making or subscribing the declaration required to be taken, made, and subscribed, to enable any such person to hold and enjoy any of such places, and without receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of Ireland, any law, statute, or by-law of any corporation to the contrary notwithstanding; provided that every such person shall take and subscribe the oath appointed by the said act passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his Majesty's reign, entitled, An act to enable his Majesty's subjects, of whatever persuasion, to testify their allegiance to him; and also the oath and declaration following, that is to say:

“ I A. B. do hereby declare, that I do profess the Roman Catholic religion. I A. B. do swear, that I do abjure, condemn, and detest, as unchristian and impious, the principle that it is unlawful to murder, destroy, or any ways injure any person whatsoever, for, or under the pretence of being an heretic; and I do declare solemnly before God, that I believe, that no act in itself unjust, immoral, or wicked, can ever be justified or excused by, or under pretence, or colour, that it was done either for the good of the church, or in obedience to any ecclesiastical power whatsoever. I also declare, that it is not an article of the Catholic faith, neither am I thereby required to believe or profess, that the Pope is infallible, or that I am bound to obey any order, in its own nature immoral, though the Pope or any ecclesiastical power should issue or direct such order, but, on the contrary, I hold, that it would be sinful in me to pay any respect or obedience thereto; I further declare, that I do not believe that any sin whatsoever committed by me can be forgiven at the mere will of any Pope, or any priest, or of any person whatsoever; but that sincere sorrow for past sins, a firm and sincere resolution to avoid future guilt, and to atone to God, are previous and indispensable requisites to establish a well-founded expectation of forgiveness, and that any person, who receives absolution without these previous requisites, so far from obtaining thereby any remission of his sins incurs the additional guilt of violating a sacrament; and I do swear, that I will

defend to the utmost of my power the settlement and arrangement of property in this country as established by the laws now in being; I do hereby disclaim, disavow, and solemnly abjure any intention to subvert the present church establishment for the purpose of substituting a Catholic establishment in its stead; and I do solemnly swear, that I will not exercise any privilege, to which I am or may become entitled, to disturb and weaken the Protestant religion and Protestant government in this kingdom.—So help me God.

“ VIII. And be it enacted, that Papists, or persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, may be capable of being elected professors of medicine, upon the foundation of Sir Patrick Dunu, any law or statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

“ IX. Provided always, and be it enacted, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend to enable any person to sit or vote in either house of parliament, or to hold, exercise, or enjoy the office of lord lieutenant, lord deputy, or other chief governor or governors of this kingdom, lord high chancellor or keeper, or commissioner of the great seal of this kingdom, lord high treasurer, chancellor of the exchequer, chief justice of the court of king's bench, or common pleas, lord chief baron of the court of exchequer, justice of the court of king's bench or common pleas, or baron of the court of exchequer, judge of the high court of admiralty, master or keeper of the rolls, secretary of state, keeper of the privy seal, vice-treasurer, or deputy vice-treasurer, teller and cashier of the exchequer, or auditor-general, lieutenant or governor, or custos rotulorum of counties, secretary to the lord lieutenant, lord deputy, or other chief governor or governors of this kingdom, member of his majesty's most honourable privy council, prime sergeant, attorney-general, solicitor-general, second and third sergeants at law, or king's council, masters in chancery, provost, or fellow of the college of the holy undivided Trinity of queen Elizabeth, near Dublin; post-master-general, master, and lieutenant-general of his majesty's ordnance, commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces, generals on the staff, and sheriffs, and sub-sheriffs of any county in this kingdom; or any office contrary to the rules, orders and directions made and established by the lord lieutenant and council in pursuance of

the act passed in the seventeenth and eighteenth years of king Charles the Second, entitled, An act for the explaining some doubts arising upon an act, entitled, An act for the better execution of his Majesty's gracious Declaration for the Settlement of this Kingdom of Ireland, and satisfaction of the several interests of adventurers, soldiers, and other his subjects there, and for making some alterations of, and additions unto the said act, for the more speedy and effectual settlement of this kingdom, unless he shall have taken, made, and subscribed the oaths and declarations, and performed the several requisites, which by any law heretofore made, and now of force, are required to enable any person to sit or vote, or to hold, exercise, and enjoy the said offices respectively.

“ X. Provided also, and be it enacted, that nothing in this act contained shall enable any Papist, or person professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, to exercise any right of presentation to any ecclesiastical benefice whatsoever.

“ XI. And be it enacted, that no Papist, or person professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, shall be liable or subject to any penalty for not attending divine service on the Sabbath-day, called Sunday, in his or her parish church.

“ XII. Provided also, and be it enacted, that nothing herein contained, shall be construed to extend to authorize any Popish priest, or reputed Popish priest, to celebrate marriage between Protestant and Protestant, or between any person, who hath been or professed himself or herself to be a Protestant, at any time within twelve months before such celebration of marriage, and a Papist, unless such Protestant and Papist shall have been first married by a clergyman of the Protestant religion, and that every Popish priest, or reputed Popish priest, who shall celebrate any marriage between two Protestants, or between any such Protestant and Papist, unless such Protestant and Papist shall have been first married by a clergyman of the Protestant religion, shall forfeit the sum of five hundred pounds to his majesty, upon conviction thereof.

“ XII. And whereas it may be expedient, in case his majesty, his heirs and successors shall be pleased so to alter the statutes of the college of the holy and undivided Trinity near Dublin, and of the university of Dublin, as to enable persons professing the Roman Catholic religion to enter into

or to take degrees in the said university, to remove any obstacle which now exists by statute law; be it enacted, that from and after the 1st day of June, 1793, it shall not be necessary for any person upon taking any of the degrees usually conferred by the said university, to make or subscribe any declaration, or to take any oath, save the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, any law or statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

“ XIV. Provided always, that no Papist or Roman Catholic, or person professing the Roman Catholic or Popish religion, shall take any benefit by or under this act, unless he shall have first taken and subscribed the oath and declaration in this act contained and set forth, and also* the said oath* appointed by the said act passed in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his Majesty's reign, entitled, An act to enable his Majesty's subjects, of whatever persuasion, to testify their allegiance to him, in some one of his Majesty's four courts in Dublin, or at the general sessions of the peace, or at any adjournment thereof to be holden for the county, city, or borough wherein such Papist or Roman Catholics, or person professing the Roman Catholic or Popish religion, doth inhabit or dwell, or before the going judge or judges of assize in the county wherein such Papist or Roman Catholic, or person professing the Roman Catholic or Popish religion, doth inhabit and dwell in open court.

“ XV. Provided always, and be it enacted, that the names of such persons as shall so take and subscribe the said oath and declaration, with their titles and additions, shall be entered upon the rolls, for that purpose to be appointed by said respective courts; and that the said rolls once in every year shall be transmitted to, and deposited in the rolls office in this kingdom, to remain amongst the records thereof, and the masters or keepers of the rolls in this kingdom, or their lawful deputy or deputies, are hereby empowered and required to give and deliver to such person or persons so taking and subscribing the said oaths and declaration, a certificate or certificates of such person or persons having taken and subscribed the said oaths and declaration, for each of which certificates the sum of one shilling and no more shall be paid.

* See the form of this oath, p. 96.

“XVI. And be it further provided and enacted, that from and after the first day of April, 1793, no freeholder, burgess, freeman, or inhabitant of this kingdom, being a Papist or Roman Catholic, or person professing the Roman Catholic or Popish religion, shall at any time be capable of giving his vote for the electing of any knight or knights of any shire or county within this kingdom, or citizen or burgess to serve in any parliament, until he shall have first produced and shewn to the high sheriff of the said county, or his deputy or deputies, at any election of a knight or knights of the said shire, and to the respective chief officer or officers of any city, borough, or town-corporate, to whom the return of any citizen, or burgess to serve in parliament doth or shall respectively belong, at the election of any citizen or burgess to serve in parliament, such certificate of his having taken and subscribed the said oaths and declaration, either from the rolls office, or from the proper officer of the court in which the said oaths and declaration shall be taken and subscribed; and such person being a freeholder, freeman, burgess, or inhabitant so producing and shewing such certificate, shall be then permitted to vote, as amply and fully as any Protestant freeholder, freeman, burgess, or inhabitant of such county, city, borough, or town-corporate, but not otherwise.”

The question of parliamentary reform met not equal good fortune. The speech of Mr. Grattan deserves, nevertheless, its place, as an able historical document, stating the corruption of the representation, and giving the history of that corruption,—delivered on the 8th of February. Mr. Grattan.—“I will not say that this is the most important subject that was ever agitated in this house—I do remember, in 1782, another subject of equal, if not superior, moment. The question then was, whether Ireland should be governed by the parliament of another country, and the present is, whether she should enjoy a parliament of her own? As the subject of par-

liamentary reform is now posted, it is impossible for government to retreat from it. Their declarations the fourth day of the session—the words of the lord lieutenant's secretary—the liberal grants of the house, have established the necessity of acceding to a reform in parliament, and have sealed the doom of every rotten borough in the kingdom; hence I collect two things; that parliament should be reformed—that the reform must take place this session. Here let us appeal to gentlemen conversant with the disposition of the people; do not they think so? Are they not convinced of it—do not they know—have they not declared, that their constituents do now expect a reform of parliament, and that it is a measure not more necessary for their freedom than their felicity? Having mentioned the state of the question, I will advert to the state of your representation—it is short. Of three hundred members, above two hundred are returned by individuals; from forty to fifty are returned by ten persons; several of your boroughs have no resident elector at all, some of them have but one; and, on the whole, two-thirds of the representatives in the house of commons are returned by less than one hundred persons! This is not that ancient, that venerable constitution of king, lords and commons. It is not even an aristocracy. It is an oligarchy. It is not an oligarchy of property, but of accident; not of prescription, but of innovation. Here again I appeal to the conscious conviction of every man who hears me; and I assert two propositions, which can neither

be denied nor defended : first, that the majority of the representatives are chosen by individuals ; second, that a great proportion of them are afterwards endowed by the crown. And it follows, that, in our present state of representation, the house of commons cannot be supposed to be the organ of the people.

In defence of such a state, three arguments are advanced : first, its antiquity—antiquity ! an establishment you would imagine that took place in Saxon times, in the age of the Confessor, or after the English intercourse with Ireland, at the time of the charter of John, or the reign of Edward—No ! James the First was the king who made above forty of those private boroughs. In the year 1613, the members returned to parliament were two hundred and thirty-two ; since which time sixty-eight members have been added, all by the house of Stuart ; one by Anne, four by James the Second ; most of the remainder by Charles the First, with a view to religious distinctions, and by Charles the Second with a view to personal favour. If you look to antiquity, therefore, the boroughs stand on bad ground. The form of your constitution was twelve counties, established in the reign of king John. Henry the Eighth added one ; Mary two ; and Elizabeth seventeen. Since which time your counties received no addition whatsoever, though between the year 1613 and the present, the borough interest has received an addition of sixty eight members ; which is more than double the whole of the county representation.

The great division on this subject is cities and boroughs, where the grant was to burgesses and freemen indefinite, or to a limited number of burgesses, seldom exceeding twelve, in whom the right of election was confined. The former are boroughs intended to be free, and the latter intended to be otherwise. The number of the former, I apprehend, to be above forty; and where they have become what we understand to be intended by the word "close-boroughs," they have departed from the intention of the grant, and ought, pursuant to the meaning of that grant, to be opened. The other class, which I apprehend to be above forty, are, in their origin, vicious; it is a monopoly like any of the other monopolies of James I., a grant in its nature criminal. Most of the forty boroughs created by James I. were so. It appears, from the grants themselves, that they were intended to be private property; they were granted as a personal reward for doing some specific transaction. Such a grant could stand, I apprehend, on no principle whatsoever. These, with those made by Charles I., became a subject of complaint; they were most of them made on the eve of calling a parliament, and some of them not sealed till after the writ of summons had issued, and were so loudly complained of, that Charles I. had promised to submit a plan to the consideration of parliament. Thus are these two descriptions of boroughs, the one intended to be free by the grant, and rendered close by the proprietor; the other intended to be close by the grant, and rendered vicious by the

principles of the law. The first set of boroughs are liable to be questioned for departing from their original purpose, and the last for adhering to it.

Let us compare the state of these boroughs with the principles of the constitution. The principles of the constitution are sacred, its organization accidental. Are these defensible on the ground of population or property, or population and property mixed? Population is out of the case; and, as to property, we will suppose two hundred members returned by one hundred individuals, what property do the former represent? Suppose the property of these individuals is £4,000 per annum, they represent £400,000, and vote near £2,000,000 taxes on the people. They are two-thirds of the house voting near £2,000,000, and not representing half a million. But if you add what is received back again in place or pension, you will find it comes nearly to this, that the majority tax others, and not their constituents. Take it in a stronger light; it is well known that near forty persons are returned by above ten individuals, somewhat more than the sixth of the house of commons, representing that quantity of property and population. By the old constitutions, the constituents paid their representatives; try the present state of representation by that test.

Could the one hundred individuals pay the two hundred members? Could the ten individuals pay the forty members? So far from any right on the principle of property to send so many mem-

bers to parliament to pay the state, they could not pay the members. The argument, therefore, can stand no examination; neither the test of property, nor population, nor antiquity. These boroughs have been established by accident, by humour, by ignorance, and by favour, without any regard to property, population, or any one principle of the constitution. The second argument in their favour is, that they have worked well; that the constitution has flourished under rotten boroughs. I beg leave to consider the operations of the constitution on the public welfare and on private property.

As to public welfare, I acknowledge many beneficial acts, wholesome regulations, and one great revolution; but may I be suffered to think, that the redemption of this country had been more speedily established, the good of this country more uniformly pursued, and with less intervals of inconsistency, if parliament had been constituted more according to the principles of the constitution. As it is constituted, to me its ordinary operation appears defective, its raptures successful, and its relapses disgraceful.

You have certain committees, committees of courts of justice; have they acted? Committees of trade; have they acted? What was the case of the East India trade? Committees of grievances; have they acted? It appears to me, that the functions of the house of commons would be discharged with more benefit to the public, and more honour to itself, under a constitution by representation, than a constitution by boroughs.

I have had opportunities to speak to the growth of the expences of government. I have shown, without the probability of contradiction, that in seven years you have, in those expences alone, exceeded your estimates in the sum of £163,000. I did not form my comparison with the actual expence of 1784; if I had, the excess had been greater, particularly with regard to the civil establishment, which was, in the year 1784, £174,000, and the excess, therefore, £33,000, not £17,000, as the right honourable gentleman was pleased to mention. But I mentioned a progress of expence still more striking, that since the year 1769, you have increased your annual charge, including debt, more in proportion than Great Britain, notwithstanding the American war and all her armaments. But the evil effects on private fortunes of this species of representation are more sensibly felt, and more readily understood; those who have contested boroughs, those who have repeatedly obtained seats in this house for boroughs, may find in their mortgages an answer to the admirers of the present system. I may aver, without fear of contradiction, that the expences of election and returns of parliament are so ruinous, that no private fortune can support them; that the expence for obtaining returns for a borough, except under the gift of a patron, are so great, as no private fortune can sustain; that these expences increase with the powers of the constitution. I have heard that seats in this house, forty years ago, were obtained for £600. I have heard that they now cost £3,000, and

you know these expences are ultimately paid by the public. Hence arises what we often lamented, the trade of parliament, a trade in which the dealer does not make £6 per cent. by his money, with all the other sacrifices of honour, &c. I wish to lay the axe at the root of this trade, in which the political morality, as well as the freedom of the country, are intimately concerned. I shall be told, there have been exceptions to this expence; I feel it, but I feel, also, that the expence is the rule, and the saving an exception. The property of boroughs, the sale of boroughs, the sale of honours, sale of votes, private embarrassments, and public servility, all will be corrected by the reform of parliament; and the constitution under its defective state, so far from working as well as gentlemen have flattered themselves, has been attended with a growth of public expence, equalled only by an accumulation of private difficulties. The third argument in support of the present system is, that gentlemen cannot agree about a better. We agree in what we condemn; we cannot well differ in the principle on which we are to reform. We agree, I apprehend, that twelve burgesses should not return two members to serve in parliament. That is, we agree in the destruction of close boroughs. We agree on the principle which is to conduct your compasses, a mass of propertied people, the precise number only a subject of discussion; but we agree, that we are to look to a mass of people having property. How far we are to go, and what geographical line, whether the circle of a county,

or any lesser circumscription, may be a subject of discussion, but not of discord.

We cannot differ about the propriety of residence, of extending the franchise to freemen by birth, marriage, or the exercise of a trade for a certain time. Perhaps we shall not differ on the propriety of extending the right of voting to landholders having a certain valuable interest; a universal registry; elections to be limited in time, and to be carried on in different places at once; an oath to be taken by the candidate, and to be repeated at your bar, by the member:

“That he has not been at any expence whatsoever, nor paid any sum whatsoever, to procure his return, by himself or others.”

These, with some other regulations, when added to an internal reform, which should exclude officers of the revenue, and a long et cetera, which my friend will explain, and which will reduce the influence, by excluding all pensioners for years, and placemen, except such as are in higher departments, show, I think, that the subject, however it may have been supposed to be involved in difficulties, yet contains the principles of concord.

These broad principles carried into execution, must insure you that constitution, temperate at once and pure, founded on the true principles of property, with population, including what is well understood by the words, “constitutional public,” giving to every farmer a sort of station in his country; and to every landlord an interest to give an encouraging lease. Thus, the reform of

parliament may be a good system of agriculture, as well as of liberty. These principles, I say, carried into execution, may produce that steady calm in the minds of men, which results from the sense of a good constitution, and the benefits of an honest representation. Mr. Grattan then read three resolutions, and moved the first:

“Resolved, That the representation of the people is attended with great and heavy charges and payments, in consequence of elections and returns of members to serve in parliament, and that said abuses ought to be abolished.

“Resolved, That of the three hundred members elected to serve in parliament, the counties, and counties of cities, and towns, together with the university, return eighty-four members, and that the remaining two hundred and sixteen are returned by boroughs and manors.

“Resolved, That the state of the representation of the people in parliament requires amendment.”

These resolutions were opposed by Sir John Parnell, the chancellor of the exchequer, who proposed instead of them, but in the form of an amendment, “that under the present system of representation, the privileges of the people, the trade and prosperity of the country, have greatly increased; and, that if any plan be proposed, likely to increase those advantages, and not hazard what we already possess, it ought to be taken into the most serious consideration.” After a long debate, this resolution was carried by a majority of 153 to 71.

On the 19th of July, Mr. George Ponsonby, in the name of his brother, presented a bill for the more equal representation of the people in parliament. The former gentleman, with his con-

nexions, had ever since the regency dispute joined the opposition; and by their influence, as well as by his own abilities, he had acquired as much consideration and importance as could be conferred by a party, which adhered neither to government nor the people. The outline of the plan proposed by this bill was, that three representatives should be appointed for each county, and for the cities of Dublin and Cork. With regard to other cities, boroughs, towns or manors, that persons residing within the distance of four miles every way from the centre of each, (within such variations as necessity might demand) should have a right to vote for its representatives, if possessed of a ten pound freehold: that no person admitted to the freedom of any corporation, should thereby acquire such a right, unless he were also seized within the city or town corporate, of a five pound freehold, upon which he or his family resided for a year before the election and admission; that this regulation should not extend to persons acquiring that freedom by birth, marriage, or service: and lastly, that an oath should be taken by every person returned to serve in parliament, that he had not purchased his seat.

However, by this time, all prospect of accomplishing any thing on this subject had disappeared. The hope that had been excited by the unanimous consent of parliament to go into a committee, was disappointed by the rejection of Mr. Grattan's resolutions, and the adoption of Sir John Parnell's amendment; it was completely

blasted by the successive adjournments, which defeated every attempt to render the committee's proceedings of any avail; and the presenting of Mr. Ponsonby's bill, was rather considered as the formal discharge of a promise long since made, than as a step towards success.

At this time the seeds of strife and religious persecution, sown in the county of Armagh seven years before, sprouted forth abundant mischiefs. In order to develop the mines and springs, productive of the calamitous explosions we have experienced, it will be indispensable to investigate the direct and collateral impulses, guiding that awful phenomenon, the French revolution, in its rapid, devious and terrific career, with its impression on this country. The learning and talent of France were a long time active in disseminating principles of freedom and philosophy; but it was the participation of the French armies in liberating America from English government, and the close intercourse of sentiment and reasoning, among the defenders of liberty, that gave not only the French armies serving in the cause, but the nation at large, reading eloquent justifications of the resistance of their allies, practical lessons of reform, and models for imitation. The humiliation of the house of Bourbon, during the administration of the elder Pitt, excited in this powerful monarchy a thirst for retaliation; and the resistance of those very colonies, whose disputes with the French settlements on that continent, caused the rupture, now furnished the wished-for opportunity.

England, and its government, at least the leading part of the English, mortified at the successful issue of the American struggle for liberty, and incensed against the house of Bourbon, for the powerful aid furnished thereto, were equally, in their turn, impatient for revenge. When they reflected on the armed neutrality of the North, together with the lately proved respectability of the French and Spanish navies, interest concurred with their anger, in seizing on the next occasion that might offer, to cripple their power.

Many years did not elapse, when occurrences happened in the rival kingdom, favourable to their wishes. The failure of public credit, the rising spirit of liberty, the prodigality and inconsiderate conduct of the court, were bringing affairs speedily to a crisis there. The partizans of French freedom felt or affected great veneration for the British constitution and people, carried so far as to ape their dress and manners. Their opponents, defenders of the old system, were confident, that the new principles would be reprobated at the court of St. James's, as well as other courts. The influence of England, with both contending parties, was very considerable. Both parties courted the countenance of their jealous rival. The obstinate resistance of the court, nobility and hierarchy, to the regeneration of France, increased the number, power and resolution of the patriots, to attempt it by force; but money, the sinew of war, was wanting. In this emergency they applied to the duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood, and richest

subject in Europe, with the flattering prospect of seating him on the throne of France. Gained by this lure, he arrives in London, and the Orleans collection of paintings is brought to the hammer. Shortly after the duke's return to Paris, entertainments were prepared in the taverns and coffee-houses of that city, for the officers and privates of the garrison, where they were profusely regaled, free of cost, with provisions, liquor and politics. Matters being thus prepared, the Bastille was taken by storm, and the revolution went on, to the tune of "Ca Ira," with irresistible force. The views of the revolutionists, at first, extended no farther than the establishment of a limited monarchy, free from the defects and abuses in the British constitution. This the national assembly established, according to the measure of their judgment, and it might have subsisted, notwithstanding the discontents of the nobility and hierarchy, but for foreign interference; the discontented would, however reluctantly, be obliged to acquiesce in the new order of things. Both parties would not have been driven to the extremity of civil war. The death of the king and queen, infinite murders and confiscations, might have been prevented. The long and disastrous wars, that have afflicted and subdued so great a portion of Europe, would not have taken place; France would have rested within its former limits, and the active genius of that mercurial people would be occupied with internal reforms and ameliorations.

The desire of reducing the extent and power of

the French monarchy, influenced the sovereigns of Europe to encourage the hopes of the French court and aristocrats, to effect a counter-revolution. The royal family, and vast numbers of the discontented, were to emigrate to the Austrian dominions, and, erecting the royal standard, march with the armies of coalesced Europe, to crush rebellious subjects, while the royalists of the interior would assail them in the rear, and prevent their escape. Burke, in his philippic against the French revolution, undisguisedly predicted the intended massacre, when he said, "Whatever will not be battle will be military execution!" The experiment was made, emigrations multiplied, and the royal family were detained in their flight at Varennes, near the frontier.

The first plan so far failing, only strengthened the hands of the revolutionists, by discouraging their opponents, recruiting their numbers, and furnishing reasonable pretexts for confiscation, by the abdication of so many land proprietors. The first counter-revolution plan must now be altered. A monarchy of such long standing, and so much venerated by the people, must have had an immense number of adherents. In the descending scale of patronage, from the palace to the custom-house, various must be the descriptions of persons who subsisted under it; a considerable portion also regretted the confiscation of ecclesiastical estates, their support, while held by the dignified clergy; the numerous dependants of the nobility, may be ranked, in great part, with the vast host of those who were disaffected

to the revolutionists. Add to this mass of concealed, internal enemies, that France was open then to strangers from all quarters, who would not quarrel with the revolution; Germans, Italians, French, Dutch, English, &c. welcome, if they did not condemn, and eagerly embraced, if they applauded the late proceedings. These men could mix in all their assemblies, excite and lead mobs, a formidable instrument in those days. The violent declaimer urging to excesses, is the most persuasive orator to a mob. The agitations between the defeated and victorious parties were directed, by the combined efforts of the discontented and foreign emissaries, to such violent extremes, as to make the cause of liberty odious. Nothing further was wanting but invasion, avowedly in support of, and therefore supposed to have been invited by, a defeated court and aristocracy, to paroxysm to insanity a people, hitherto victorious indeed, but tormented with alarms, plots, some real, more fictitious, and incensed by foreign menaces. The duke of Brunswick entered France at the head of ninety thousand men, and the insolent threats, and bullying bravadoes of his senseless manifestoes, excited universal indignation and contempt. The parties coalesced, except in a few provinces. The armies were embodied that over-ran Europe; the unfortunate Louis was beheaded; monarchy abolished, and France declared a republic. The violent excesses of the triumphant revolutionists, raised a general outcry of indignation against them and their cause. No where was the counter-

revolutionary storm more vehement than in England, where ancient rivalry, and national antipathy, swelled its force. A lordly borough-monger, legislating for and taxing the people, by two, four, &c. proxies in one house, and personally in another, cried out against levellers, who, in their attempt to realize the theory of the British constitution, studied to guard against its practical imperfections and corruptions. Bishops, who, by the grace of God, fatten on the fat of the land: parsons, who live sumptuously on the tithes exacted from the farmer; and who can spare so little time from luxury, company and amusements, that their neglected flock stray after tub-preachers, cried out, unanimously, against the French revolution, saying: All the powers of Europe ought to join against the rascally French. They have destroyed the church!!! Yea, forsooth they have destroyed the church! What sympathy, what sorrow, for the losses of a church, usually stigmatized as popish, idolatrous, antichristian; the very scarlet harlot, whore of Babylon, riding on the beast with seven heads and ten horns, quaffing the golden cup of abominations, and committing fornication with the kings of the earth! Now it is, alas! alas! Babylon the great is fallen! Bishops and parsons are reduced to a moderate income, not sufficient to place them above the discharge of their duty; and tithes abolished in a country accustomed to lead the fashion. Alas! alas! the example desired by most people may be imitated here to our own overthrow! Court, church and state, both houses,

with the whole host of their satellites, retainers, parasites, advocates for things as they are, through all their gradations from the court to the revenue and excise, cried out, with a loud voice, Great is the British constitution, the admiration of the world! It is by its present state, consecrated by time, we gain our bread. French reform is against the good order of society, against religion: it is the war of the giants against heaven. They no longer pay tithes. Their bishops no longer enjoy the splendor, luxury and revenue of princes in stately palaces, nor display their former pomp and magnificence. These robbers have at once swept away the pension-list, sinecure places, secret-service money, perquisites, and all the goodies and douceurs, sweet to the palates of privileged classes, while they cost the people tears! War alone can save us from these, and many more evils. War, only, can save us from parliamentary reform, the greatest of all calamities, which would bring all other evils in its train. Away with the rotten boroughs, sinecure places, and pensions unmerited, or exorbitant church lands and church pluralities, tithes, &c. &c. All these fine things, these flowery blossoms of the best constitution in the world, would be sacrificed to ease the lower orders, born only to toil for their betters. The contagion of French principles is catching; already societies are forming, and publications sent abroad for disseminating them. War against French principles, still more than against French power, is become indispensable in our defence.

The friends of reform in both islands, were overpowered by the counter-revolutionary storm, that set in so furiously against French principles, jacobins, levellers, regicides. Two eminent orators, of Irish birth, sounded the tocsin at the command of Pitt, invited Europe to a new crusade, and the first coalition was formed. While the heaven-born minister was zealously employed in purchasing the veteran armies of Europe, for punishment of foreign delinquency, the suppression of infidelity, and the protection of the catholic church of France, he earnestly laboured to avert the bitter cup of reform at home. How indeed could it be expected, that that boon would be granted to Ireland? for, had reform been granted to the Irish, could it be refused to the people of England? There were further and serious objections against granting reform to Ireland. Besides setting a precedent that could not be evaded, for a fair representation in England, it must include catholic emancipation, as well as the extinction of boroughs; it could not be reformed, or even called an Irish parliament, without this. The late suicide parliament was called unjustly Irish; it was the parliament of the English protestant pale, successor to the parliament of the English catholic pale.

The first act of the triumphant party to stem the progress of reform was to bring in the convention-bill, which they falsely called a bill declaratory of what the law of the land had already been. It had a double object, to check the further progress of catholic emancipation, and prevent im-

portunate applications for parliamentary reform. The castle had so contrived to divide the catholic body, that some noblemen and gentlemen, with lord Kenmare at their head, were inclined and persuaded to prepare a petition of their own, short of the wishes of the body at large. This variance encouraged government to reject the petition of the catholic committee, as not expressing the sentiments of the catholics, nor presented by people deputed by them. Then were they necessitated to have recourse to a convention. If the bill was only declaratory of what the law was before, then the convention was illegal: why not punish, instead of rewarding by ample concessions?—The bill lied. There was no previous law against acting by delegation. The fraud, unconstitutionality, and despotic nature of this bill, now first brought into action, cannot be better explained than was done by Mr. Grattan in its progress through parliament.

I rely upon it, said he, that the declaratory part of this bill has not been, and cannot be supported by law, but that it is a gross and ignorant misrepresentation of the law of the land, which it affects to declare. It is not supported by law, and it is in the face of daily practices. What was the committee of commerce in this country, but such an assembly as is here pronounced illegal? What the delegates from the different counties in England, in 1780, to promote a reduction of the expences of the state? What the conventions in England, in 1782, for the purpose of the reform of parliament? What the

delegates for the procuring the repeal of the test act? What the presbyterian synod? What the delegates of the quakers? What the convention in England, for the purpose of restoring Charles the second? What the convention in Ireland, for bringing about the revolution in 1668; a convention stiled a northern association and general council, to direct the operations of associated bodies, united for the purpose of religion and liberty? But I cannot omit one convention to which the present family owes its crown, and which, if this bill is law, was an act of rebellion: I mean that glorious and immortal assembly, purporting to represent the people of England, that placed the crown on the head of William and Mary: this assembly comes under every clause in this bill, descriptive of illegal assembly: had such a bill as this been the law of England, and been executed, lord Somers and the leaders in the revolution must have been apprehended. I have read much of the proceedings of the catholics at the time of the revolution, but I never before read their justification in the shape of an act of parliament; for if this declaratory bill be law, then the convention of 1668 was against law, and all its proceedings of course, and amongst others the settlement of the crown, illegal, and the resistance of the catholics to that settlement warrantable by law. Who would have thought that the catholics would have found in the defamer of their loyalty, an apologist for their rebellion? who would have thought to have found in a bill, professing to be a strong mea-

sure in favour of power, the seed of a principle which impeacheth the succession of the crown in the present illustrious family? But so interwoven, fortunately I think it, is the title of the king with the liberties of his people, that no man can be the notorious and intemperate and blasted enemy of the one, without at the same time suggesting a question against the other. Such melancholy and gross ignorance does this act betray of the history of both countries, and such a total and shocking disregard to every trace of sound constitutional principle, without which no man can be a safe lawyer, or a good citizen. Blackstone speaks of this law of redress; the law of redress ascertained as at the revolution, and the law of redress unascertained, as in those cases where the governing powers betray their trust, and conspire against the commonweal, such as the modesty of the law will not suppose, and therefore against which it does not provide a remedy, but leaves the redress open to the exigency; and it is this which lord Bolingbroke means, when he says the constitution of Great Britain cannot be destroyed, even by parliament. Kings, like James II. may abdicate; parliaments, like his parliament, may betray their trust, but the resources of this constitution are such that the people cannot be enslaved, until they themselves are universally corrupt: how then are they to redress themselves when they are betrayed by parliament; how, in such a case? How, but by resorting to what this bill makes a misdemeanor, the appointment or delegation of some body or bodies who may confer and communicate.

This bill, I therefore submit, is not only a declaration of law false and ignorant, but highly criminal and mischievous, as a provision against those popular resources, which Ireland found necessary once, and England found necessary also, and without which neither had been free: resources which should neither be prohibited nor encouraged. Let me suppose, that the persons, who gave their early and almost infant voice against a motion to declare the rights of the Irish parliament, had succeeded so far as to prevent the house, in the end, from adopting that measure: let me suppose, that the same persons, who proposed to give back the substance of those rights, on the question of the memorable propositions, attended as that question was with a senseless petulance of speech, against the character, as well as the pretensions, of Ireland: let me suppose, that they at that time had prevailed: let me suppose, that those who denied the substance of that declaration of right on the question of the regency, and maintained that a British convention could make a law for the people of Ireland, and that this country was governed by the great seal of England: let me suppose, that they had been able, at that time, to impose their empty quibble as law, and their shameless assertion as constitution: let me suppose, that he who had declared, in this house, that the Irish parliament had been once bought for half a million, and that it might be made necessary to buy it again, for the same or a greater sum: let me suppose, that he had been able to establish the

profligacy of this principle, the violence of such measures, or the corruption of such practices, as permanent maxims of government: let me suppose, that those who, by the precipitation of their temper, inflamed, misled, and finally exposed, the protestant interest, as they have since endeavoured to alienate the catholic interest, by the petulance of their language: let me suppose, that they had prevailed in any, and, still more, in all of their desperate enterprises against their country: in such case or cases, might not a convention have been necessary? It is true, the good sense of some of his majesty's ministers has checked the arbitrary genius that inspired such sentiments, governed his temper, and renounced his bigotry, and, by taking reconciling steps, has rendered a convention at present unnecessary, improper and improbable. But in a country where such practices have been resorted to, and such avowal of such profligacy publicly made, shall we say that, in no time to come, there shall ever be a convention? Such a practice, and such an unabashed avowal of such a practice, is the subversion of all government, of English government in Ireland, or of any government, because it is the subversion of those principles, moral and religious, without which there can be no government. The minister, therefore, who proclaimed, that it was the custom of the British government to buy the Irish parliament with half millions, proclaimed, by necessary deduction, the necessity of an Irish convention. Happily, I say, that principle is changed, and a convention unneces-

sary and unwarranted: but in a country where such a thing could even have been publicly advanced by administration, will you pass an act against any convention at any time to come, or any representation of any description of the people, for any specific public purpose? Sir, if this bill had been the law of the land, four great events could never have taken place: the independency of the Irish parliament; the emancipation of the Irish catholics; the revolution in Great Britain; and the great event that flowed from it, the succession of the Hanoverian family. The enacting part is a bill of popular incapacities, instead of a constitution of popular resources; the enacting part is a proviso against future redress, in cases of emergency, as the declaratory part is a declaration against the legality of past redress. In this latter light it must be considered as a libel on the revolution; on your own meeting at Dungannon; on all the proceedings of your volunteers, and on the catholic convention. Where is the use of stigmatising the volunteers by act of parliament, if, in the cause of liberty, they sometimes went too far; if the ardour of youth could not, at all times, command the precaution of old age. Draw a veil over the infirmity; remember the essential service; respect the soldier's memory, and do not now, when he is dead, assemble round his grave with the little enemy of his cause and his fame, to write on his tomb this dirty indictment. Some of the gentlemen who now hear me were of the lawyers' corps memorable committee. Do they recollect it?

That committee was a deputation of armed men, representing armed men, and assuming to represent the knowledge of law, as well as its battalion, for the purpose of questioning and investigating a matter touching the state, and already decided in parliament. I am not defending such a meeting; it stands on its own ground, and distinct from others; but if I had gone so very far as to be a member of that committee, I would not now prove false to my colours, and pay the minister such a compliment, at the expence of my corps and my cloth, as to acknowledge that my proceedings and theirs, influenced by their leaders, were in the face of the law. The catholic convention is another object libelled by this bill. Where is the use of the reflection? Not only they who elected, and they who composed that convention, but his Majesty, who received its deputies, comes in for his share of the obloquy. It is very evident, that one of the many views of this bill is, to attack the catholics. As to any evil designs which the catholics may be said to entertain, I believe they have none; sure I am that the charges which have been made against the body of the catholics are false; if there are grounds, state them. Let that which is to appal us all appear. It has proved nothing but vague assertion; nor can we suppose, that the catholics, who, under the penal code, preserved their allegiance, should become disaffected at the moment in which they had acquired such solid and inestimable advantages, and, through the agency of the government, which they are falsely charged

to wish to undermine. The bitterness of expression, which, in some instances, accompanied that grant, cannot exasperate them against the state, but should be rather a subject of additional thanks to the wiser part of government, who have forced the angry bigot to vote against his speech, with the humiliating privilege of babbling against his vote.

It may be to the catholics further consolation to find, that if they are calumniated, so have been the protestants; they who acted for the liberties of this country; they who since 1782 struggled for bills, which, in part, government has meritoriously acceded to, are, for that very conduct, by the same false witness, vituperated expressly as men endeavouring to foment jealousies and disunion between Great Britain and Ireland. Satisfied with the success of some of their great measures, these men have learned to despise that political jury, whose testimony against public character is now exploded as his principles.

Sir, this bill not only reflects on numbers of his Majesty's subjects as guilty of a misdemeanor, but it involves them in the penalty; it is an *ex post facto* law of pains and penalties: if this bill be law, every man who composed the catholic convention is now liable to be prosecuted for a misdemeanor; it might so happen, that some of the gentlemen who vote for the bill, might be their jury or their judges; how would they act? Would they on oath, or as on the bench, pronounce those men guilty of a misdemeanor, and which they are now ready to assert

as members of parliament? Those gentlemen may not only happen to try such offenders, but are liable to be tried themselves for such offences; for they were certainly those criminal and illegal deputies described in the act. I do not suppose government will ever think of prosecuting them, but if it should, it will, after the passing this act, have against the legality of their conduct the authority of the legislature and their own. I have objected to this bill as an innovation on the constitution; I object to it also as an innovation on the system of criminal jurisprudence: it puts the peace-officer in the place of the court of justice, in cases where there is neither tumult, nor danger of tumult; it is true, the common law makes him the judge of the imminent danger to which society is exposed, from a numerous body armed and proceeding to execute an illegal purpose, or a legal purpose in an illegal, tumultuous manner; but it is the force, or imminent danger of force, that brings the subject under the cognizance of the subordinate magistrate; the illegality alone would only bring him under the cognizance of the courts of justice. Where there are circumstances of force and horror accompanying an illegal act, then grows the power of the peace-officer; for he is not the guardian of the law, but the conservator of the peace. But this bill gives that officer, as in the instance of a peaceful meeting assembled to do a legal act, or to frame a petition for those who have deputed them so to do, this bill, I say, gives the peace-officer the power to judge of the fact of the deputation; of

the manner of exercising that trust; and of the public nature of the object of it, with right of entry, and a power to call in the military: here is the principle of the act, applied to the peaceful communication of sentiment, and is an innovation of the principles of the criminal law of these countries. The objects of this bill are, to stigmatise the catholic convention, and prevent the reform of parliament; but the pretences for this bill, I think, are three; the Defenders, the United Irishmen, and an imaginary Convention at Athlone: the last is not take place; and, on the two first, the bill will have no operation. Gentlemen must surely know, that either this convention is not to take place, or, taking place, would be feeble and frivolous. Such a convention as I have seen described, would be, indeed, unseasonable; and, I will add, wholly inadmissible. But such a bill as this, is not the way to defeat it. You remember a much more formidable convention than this supposed one of Athlone; a convention of armed men, representing the volunteer army, sitting at the Rotunda with a guard, and preparing plans for parliament: some of the friends of this bill, members of this house, were deputies of that convention; accepted delegation, sat and voted, and whatever evil was incurred, had a full share in it. But how did the then attorney-general act? Did he alter the constitution under pretence of defending it? Did he make use of popular excesses to abridge the liberty of the subject? Did he give an opinion contrary to law, and then get parliament to give

an influenced judgment in support of it, and invade the constitution under pretence of declaring the law? No; when the convention attempted to act, he framed a resolution, which purported the defence of the constitution against all encroachment: the consequence was, the convention dispersed, and the constitution stood unaltered and unimpaired; unimpaired either by the encroachment of a convention, or of a convention-bill. In the present case, the prorogation of parliament cannot interfere, unless government prefers a long prorogation; and sure I am, that if such a thing as the described convention is to take place, it were much better to meet it with the precedent I have mentioned, than with this bill; but it is evident no such thing is now apprehended: the spirit of the people does not beat high, and because the spirit is not high, this bill is brought forward. The friends of the bill have seized the opportunity of public panic, which certain excesses have excited. I condemn both, the excesses and the remedy; instead of either I am for the constitution of England.

On the second reading of the bill, he dives still deeper into its nature and tendency. He was aware that one object was, to shut out for the future catholic claims, and gratify spleen at their past acquisitions. Another, to perpetuate lucrative abuses, and render any application on the part of the people for redress, ineffectual. He saw the violence and excess to which the Irish and English parties were alternately impelled and exasperated against each other. Whether he saw,

at that time, the hand behind the curtain, that communicated those hostile impulses, and inflamed with rancorous animosity the friends and enemies of Ireland, proceeding with cool and cruel policy, until matured into civil and religious warfare, that disgraced, fleeced, and extinguished Ireland from the map of Europe, is more than I can say.

I put a question to the learned gentlemen, said Mr. Grattan: are the two circumstances of delegation and public concernment, sufficient to constitute an unlawful assembly, except that assembly be the house of commons? or in other words, must any delegation of any description of his Majesty's subjects, other than this house, for the purpose of promoting any redress of any grievance in church or state, be considered as an unlawful assembly? They have given me no answer: but they have stated a case which is another case, and which is a quibble, and not an answer. They have said, that a representation of the people, other than the house of commons, is an unlawful assembly: it may be so; yet a delegation for promoting redress in matter of public concernment may not be so, because that delegation may not be, nor assume to be, a representative of the people, but of a certain description thereof—and yet the bill, both in its preamble and declaration, makes such assembly illegal. The case, therefore, stated by the gentlemen, is no more a defence of the bill than it is an answer to my question.

The bill states, that any representation of any

description of his Majesty's subjects for procuring redress in any matter of public concernment, is an unlawful assembly. The learned gentlemen say, that a representative of the people is so—which is not the case of that body who only assemble to represent in a particular matter, a particular province, county, city, town, district, or description of people. The case submitted to the gentlemen, and the case contained in the bill, rest illegality on the act of delegation for procuring in any manner redress in matters of public concernment. The case stated by the learned gentlemen, seems to rest the point of illegality on the generality of the representation, and their reason seems to rest it there still more than their case; for instance, they say a representative of the people, other than the house of commons, is an unlawful assembly; because the house of commons are exclusively the representatives of the people: and, therefore, to attempt to appoint a second house of commons is unlawful, because incompatible with the first. This reason in support of this case is a surrender of the principle of the bill. I do not say the bill is betrayed; but its defence is waved by the law servants of the crown: they acknowledge that there is neither statute nor adjudication in support of the principle of the bill; but they say there is reason, and that reason they allege to be this—that there cannot be at one time two representatives of the people; whereas the principle of the bill is, that any representation not of the people only, but of any description whatever thereof, for a public purpose,

save only this house, is an unlawful assembly.

The case and reasoning of the learned gentlemen would comprehend nothing but a national convention; but the cases, principle, and description of the bill, would comprehend every subdivision of delegation for public matter. The presbyterian committee, of which I read a petition yesterday, and which the protestant dissenters of England have appointed by delegation to promote redress of particular grievances, touching church and state, viz. the repeal of the test act—the delegation of quakers, if that delegation should join in an humble address for the commutation of tythes—the presbyterian synod, if that synod should presume to interfere in behalf of their flock in matters touching abuses in church or state:—all these come within the letter of the act, though by no means within the argument which attempts to defend it. They are all delegations, and in the cases I have suggested, would be employed in procuring redress of some abuses either in church or state.

I have thus merely considered the argument as far as it declined the question I proposed, and must say, that the only sense to be extracted from the argument is, that there cannot be at once two representatives of the people for the same purposes—but for different purposes it does not follow but there may.

The house of commons, whom we will, for argument's sake, suppose the real representatives of the people, is appointed for the exercise of certain powers; powers of impeachment, powers

of grant, and powers of legislation: certainly, any attempt on the part of the people to give a second order of delegates authority to exercise such powers, would in the highest degree be illegal; or what might seem to imply the same thing, the appointment of a second order of delegates to represent the people generally without any specific limitation, would be highly criminal and illegal, because that would imply the powers I have described; but the appointment of delegates for a specific and legal purpose—for instance, promoting the redress of a particular abuse touching the church or state, as the reform of parliament, a limitation of public expences, a repeal of the test act—such delegations, which do or have existed in England and Ireland, would not be an interference with the jurisdiction of the house of commons, nor within the reason of the case of the learned gentlemen. The people, in electing members to serve in parliament, part with some of their powers, and others they retain; the power of petitioning, of instructing, and of delivering their sense on abuses in church and state, they retain; with these powers, they of necessity retain another, that of forming themselves into such voluntary organization, of committee, delegates, representatives, or whatsoever you please to call them, for the purpose either of preparing their petitions, or of framing their resolutions, or calling their dispersed opinions into one consistent instrument, on the object of the particular grievance, with a view to render the exercise of the power they retain, consistent, tranquil and ope-

native. In the proceedings of such delegation, care must be taken to preserve the peace, and in specifying its object care must be taken to observe the law; but if the destination of such delegation is lawful, and the proceedings peaceful, I know of no law, and the learned gentlemen have adduced neither law nor reason to pronounce it an unlawful assembly. I see plainly the necessity of leaving such powers free; because I see a time may come, we have seen when such a time did come, when the being of the constitution shall depend on the exercise of such a power. Suppose a house of commons, as was the case of the Middlesex election, conspire against the elective rights of the community. Suppose a house of commons, as was the case of the perpetual mutiny-bill, under the influence of the minister, vote the army for ever—are the people to have no power of interfering? or, which is the same thing, no power of communicating, in order to make their interference operative and consistent? It has been said, that representative conventions are illegal; but the question of legality depends on what those representative conventions are. If they are national representative conventions, assuming expressly, or by the generality of their appointment, the functions of the house of commons, they are more than illegal—but if they are representative conventions, appointed for a special purpose, to prepare a petition, or to promote the redress of a particular grievance, such as may obtain in church or state; or such a representative convention as committees of correspondence, or the delegation

of the quakers, or the synod of the presbyterians, or such as the delegates of the protestant dissenters now existing in England—I hold it that such representative conventions are not illegal.

The honourable mover, who had made the observation, made this distinction, for the representative convention he condemned as a mock parliament; plainly intimating, that representative conventions, not in any degree assuming the function of a parliament, did not come within his objection. It would seem, therefore, that it is the assumption of parliamentary functions, and not the act of representation, nor the public concernment, which is its object, that constitutes the illegality; and this observation brings the argument of the honourable member to the same principle with that of his honourable friend, that the law will not tolerate two houses of commons. As the principle of the argument is the same, so shall be my answer, that the assemblies, described in the bill, are not only such as assume the functions of a house of commons, nor such as assume the character of unlimited representation; but such as are descriptions of his Majesty's subjects, however small, met on or for any public purpose whatsoever.

This argument, then, like the other, leaves the bill undefended. But it is advanced, in further support of this argument, that the house of commons would not receive a petition from a delegation; and, it is thence inferred, that the act of delegation is illegal: but it does not strike me in that manner. It would seem that this observa-

tion could only reach delegation, for the purpose of presenting or subscribing petitions, not preparing petitions, nor corresponding, nor digesting resolutions, nor promoting redress of specific grievances, to all which the bill goes, to none of which the argument goes; nor does the argument even go so far as to prove the illegality of any delegation whatsoever: it only proves, that delegation, for the particular purpose of presenting or subscribing petitions, is useless; but it does not prove the delegates to be an unlawful assembly; or that the peace-officers can disperse them, or the crown-officer can prosecute them. You cannot petition parliament by attorney—does it follow you cannot appoint one? Associations for the peace, delegations for redress, clubs for society, are all voluntary conventions, without seal, certificate, or incorporation. Parliament cannot know them by that description which they give themselves; does it follow that the law would punish them as an unlawful assembly?

The object of these meetings has, in general, been to propose matter for petition, or to collect or combine the public mind to one specific mode of remedy, and not in the person of delegates to approach the legislature: and it is against this proceeding the bill is directed. The bill leaves the county meetings free; its design is, to prevent the communication of county with county, and city with city, on the subject of public redress, and the reform of parliament, above all other subjects: and the reason is very obvious; the resolutions of such county or aggregate meetings:

have proved generally ineffectual; but the resolutions, formed on representative or delegated meetings, have generally proved effectual. The bill leaves the people such resources as have been abortive, and only takes away all which have been successful.

It has been said, in support of this bill, that the preamble contains in it no point of law whatsoever, but is one proposition, only stating a matter of fact. This I must deny. The preamble contains two propositions; the one, matter of fact, or rather prophesy, which is positive; the other, matter of law, which is implicative. It describes an unlawful assembly in these words: "An assembly purporting to represent the people." But it does not stop here; "or any description or number of the people, under pretence of preparing or presenting petitions, complaints, remonstrances, or declarations to the king or parliament for alterations of matter in church or state, alleged grievances, or other public concernment." But, if there was any doubt what the preamble implied, there can be no doubt but that the declaratory part expresses, that any assembly of delegates from any description or number of his Majesty's subjects, for the purpose of procuring by petition, or in any other manner, an alteration in matters established in church or state, is unlawful. Let me ask gentlemen of the bar, what was the committee of the lawyers' corps in 1782? Was not that very assembly a delegation from a certain description of his Majesty's subjects, to procure an alteration

in matters established in state; a delegation to consider a public concernment; a delegation purporting to promote the redress of grievance? There is not a description in the act that delineates an unlawful assembly, under which that committee does not come. Who appointed that committee? A certain numerous description of his Majesty's subjects. What was the object of their delegation? To consider matters of state, then settled by the law; that is, to report whether the measures taken by the parliaments of the two kingdoms were, as unanimously alleged by the parliament of Ireland, adequate, in point of law, to liberate this kingdom from the legislative interference of Great Britain. And what was their determination? In direct contradiction to a settlement concluded by both houses of parliament. They reported, that the remedy which our parliament had deemed sufficient, was inadequate; and they concluded with a redress of their own, namely, that a bill of renunciation ought to pass in the parliament of England, and a bill of right in the parliament of Ireland.

Here is a delegation taking into consideration every thing which this bill forbids—public concernment—redress of grievance, and a particular matter, vitally affecting the state, and just settled by the law; and here is a report of that delegation opening that settlement to procure an alteration therein.

There were, indeed, two circumstances, which distinguish this delegation from others which the bill describes and declares to be unlawful—the

committee were delegated by an armed body, to impeach the sufficiency of a parliamentary settlement. Do I wish to reflect on their motives? No; they thought the independency of this country was a matter of state, too invaluable, though settled by law, to be left entirely to any body of men, even the House of Commons, or to any individual of that House, however well disposed. It was an occasion in which zeal, and even suspicion, was commendable. I differed from the members of that committee, in the doctrines they then advanced against the proceeding of parliament. I differ from some of them in the doctrines they now advance against the proceedings of their own committee; and it is by a singular fatality, that it should fall to my lot to resist, and to theirs to support a bill, whose preamble and whose declaration do, in the fullest and least equivocal manner, pronounce their committee to have been an unlawful assembly, and their conduct to have been illegal.

While I combat the argument, I must give every due praise to the abilities of the learned gentleman who advanced it—for taste as a scholar, knowledge as a lawyer, and extensive, liberal and deep erudition. It has been said, that the bill does not affect committees appointed *bonâ fide* to prepare petitions or other matter, but only such as make petition a pretence for delegation—ridiculous! The bill goes against all delegation for public matter, and provides that the pretence of petitioning shall not cover the transaction.

Gentlemen having, in my humble apprehen-

sion, mistated the law, proceed, to my certain knowledge, to mistate the fact; and they insist, that in England no convention or committee, such as the bill describes, has taken place; and this, they assign, as a reason why in England there is no prohibitory statute. I mentioned yesterday one delegation this moment existing in England, a delegation from no less a description of his Majesty's subjects than the protestant dissenters in England, appointed for the express purpose of procuring an alteration in a matter by law established in church and state—the repeal of the test act. I beg to remind gentlemen of another convention that took place in London; it was a delegation from that description of his Majesty's subjects, which comprehends the manufacturing interest of England, and was deputed to consider matter that related to the state of both kingdoms—the commercial propositions. I beg leave to turn the recollection of gentlemen to other conventions in England—to those that sat in London in 1780, consisting of a deputation from above sixteen counties, delegating representatives for the purpose of forming committees of correspondence, to procure an alteration in matters touching the state; or, in other words, to frame petitions for these several counties for the reduction of the expences of the government; and further, to promote the objects of those petitions, among the number of those delegates were some from the city of London, appointed by an act of the corporation, attended with a resolution, that the Recorder of London should be assistant

to the delegation, a man of great celebrity and knowledge, both as a lawyer and a constitutionalist.

There were other most respectable names, members and chairmen of these committees, the Duke of Portland, Lord Spencer, Mr. Fox, the name of Cavendish, and most of the Whig interest of England. The Duke of Rutland was chairman to one of the committees. There was our Burke, the Marquis of Buckingham, Mr. Grenville, and many others. I do not find any proceeding against these meetings as unlawful assemblies, and yet all these came within the letter and spirit of this bill; they came within the letter of your act, for they were delegations from certain descriptions of his Majesty's subjects, to procure an alteration in matters touching the state, viz. the expences of the king's government. They come within the spirit, because the object of these committees was to procure, as that of the bill is to prevent, concert—concert among the people, in redressing those abuses in the state, which a House of Commons, as it is now returned by boroughs, and influenced by ministers, will not attend to, except when such concert out of doors, as happened in counties in almost all great questions, and did happen in the case of those very committees, renders it necessary to attend and concede. I have shown you the practice in England, and that the advocates of the bill, in matter of fact at least, are entirely mistaken. I think it has been already shown that they are in matter of law; and I beg to ask,

whether it is reasonable to suppose, that such practice, so general, so repeated, and so countenanced, is illegal; and whether such doctrines, as the advocates of the bill have advanced, unsupported by statute, unwarranted by adjudication, and in the face of such a number of precedents, indeed, of daily experience, and of their own memorable example, is law? I must, therefore, conclude this part of my answer by observing, that the arguments of this bill do not appear to have the support either of the law or of fact.

As to the expediency, I beg to speak a few words. This bill is said to be an expedient to restore peace;—why, then, is it a reflection? why do the preamble and the declaration pronounce every man who has been a delegate, all the volunteers, the delegates at Dungannon, the delegates of the convention, the committee of the lawyers' corps, and the corps that appointed that committee—the committee of the catholics, their late convention, and all the catholics who appointed that committee, that is, the whole catholic body, offenders—men guilty of an unlawful assembly, and this moment liable to be prosecuted?—For so much has the bill in object, not the peace of the country, but reflection on great bodies, and the gratification of spleen at the expence of the constitution, by voting false doctrine into law, and the brightest passages of your history into unlawful assemblies.

Gentlemen have conceived this bill an expedient to quell the insurgents; let them read the bill. It is not a riot act; the riot act seemed for-

gotten until a friend of mine put it into his temporary statute bill; it does not go against riots that are, but conventions that are not. The title of the bill, as first brought in, was to prevent riots and tumults arising from conventions; but as the bill had nothing to say to riots, and no riots appeared to have arisen from conventions, such title was in decency dropped, and the real object of the bill professed—an act against conventions. The bill, therefore, neither is, nor professes to be, a bill against riots, it is only an expedient for peace; as far as conventions now disturb it, sir, there are none.

But gentlemen say, a national convention at Athlone was intended. Sir, I do believe that such a one was intended some time ago, and that now it is not so; or, if now intended, that it would be trifling and contemptible. But if that is the object of the bill, direct the bill to that object. Do not extend the bill to every delegation from any county, city, town, district, from any description of any number of his majesty's subjects appointed to procure redress in any abuse relating to church or state. My objection to your bill is, that it is a trick—making a supposed national convention at Athlone in 1793, a pretext for preventing delegation for ever.

I have already said, that such a meeting as was invited to assemble at Athlone should be withstood. I know not what such meeting would be, except from the summonses read by gentlemen in this house; and such a meeting, I repeat it, as would assemble pursuant to such summonses,

with such a view, and under all the circumstances held out, should be withstood; for such a meeting would not be an assembly to promote the reform of parliament, but to put itself in the place of parliament. But does it follow, therefore, that the people should lose the power of delegation for ever? I acknowledge, the people retain their right to hold such primary assemblies, as meet in the aggregate; but do not we know that such meetings have been inefficacious; the object not of your respect, but of the courtiers' scorn and ridicule? and, therefore, the people have resorted to delegates, who have given to their wishes concert and effect; and, therefore, I fear it is, that a bill has been introduced, when parliamentary reform is in contemplation, to prevent such delegation; leaving to the people such popular meetings as gentlemen flatter themselves cannot have any popular effect.

My apprehension, therefore, is, that the supposed meeting at Athlone is a pretence, and that the real object of this bill is to prevent, in future, all popular effect whatsoever, particularly now, when reform has been proposed in this house; a measure offensive to all men who dislike the people, offensive to most of those who dislike the Catholics, and detestable to those men who hate both. Does it follow, because the supposed national convention at Athlone should be prevented, that all committees of correspondence, on the subject of redress, should be put down for ever? No county, no city, no description of men, can delegate a few individuals to concert the most legal

and effectual method of procuring, in an acknowledged abuse, a temperate remedy.

I am against this bill, because it is not confined to the supposed convention, but is levelled against all popular delegation in all time to come: and as I was against the excesses of some of the people which shook the principles of government, so am I now against the excesses on the other side, which attack the principles of liberty. I consider the bill as one excess reforming another; as the violence of one side attacking the constitution, as that of the other did the government. It seems to me to be compounded of a dislike to the people in general, and the catholics in particular; a concern at past acquisition, and a present apprehension of reform in parliament. It avails itself of the present panic to abridge popular rights; and it finds support in sanguine but weak minds, who know there is a disease, but have not sense enough to discover the remedy, and think that a convention-bill is to restore us all to peace; who think that, in time of local disturbance, the remedy is a bill, not against the particular disturbance, but against liberty and the people.

I must repeat my conviction against this bill, and beg to resort to the memories of gentlemen, wherein to deposit my entire disapprobation of this measure."

In passing this bill, the representatives of the people assumed a power greater than was conferred on them. The people cannot confer on their delegates to the house of commons, greater

power than they possess themselves; nor even the whole of it, without forfeiting their liberty. They must reserve the power of examining the conduct of their representatives, and communicating their opinions to them on political affairs. In modern times, members have taken shelter from such scrutiny and instructions, by alledging, that each member represents the nation at large. That subterfuge cannot take away the rights of the constituents to examine their representatives; and each county and city has a right to inquire into, and approve or condemn public measures. This bill went to deprive the catholics of all hope of further concession; and to deprive the nation at large of the only practicable mode of obtaining parliamentary reform, the quelling of the northern troubles, or the redress of any public abuse or grievance. It may be said, that the despotic governments on the Continent would not permit meetings of such delegates. First, such governments are no models for a free people: secondly, delegates from manufacturers and merchants have been frequently heard by them: thirdly, an assembly of Jewish delegates was held in Paris, during some weeks, under the eye of Napoleon: fourthly, there is no occasion for any meeting of delegates to petition for rights of conscience on the Continent, as they are fully established there already. We need not wonder, that a body of men, who did not represent the people, should hate a truly representative body, for whatsoever purpose, or by whomsoever chosen; that bribery and inflamed party spirit should

outweigh sound argument and truth; or, that a prostitute body, which, rather than submit to reform their abominable corruptions, would sell their country and themselves, should dread the advance of the great majority of the people to a participation of the constitution, which might eventually lead to the reintegration thereof, and put an end to the traffic of parliament. "If the people had a right to petition, as was allowed on all hands, they also must have a right to do so in the most convenient manner, which was evidently by delegation. Why was the house of commons elected? Why did not the people assemble in pleno comitatu, and exercise their rights themselves as a third estate? Because such a proceeding must be attended with a violation of good order, and must be productive of tumult. If, on a matter of general concern, the people, exercising their undoubted right, should meet at large in their respective towns and counties to petition, would not the same inconvenience follow? Could it be criminal then for the people to govern themselves in this instance by the same principle as in exercising their legislative function? Certainly not."*

"If the bill only went to prevent representative bodies from assuming functions peculiar to parliament," Mr. G. Ponsonby said, "he should not have objected; but if any attack should, in future, be made on the liberty of the people by any future government, they were de-

* Speech of Mr. Curran.

prived by this bill of all means of resisting it, but by an appeal to arms."

The embodying of the militia created some disturbances in different places. The peasantry had conceived suspicions of the designs of those who would employ them. They were alarmed, lest they should be sent to foreign parts, never, perhaps, to revisit their friends and native country; meanwhile, to be deprived not only of divine worship, and the other consolations of their religion, but to be compelled, by the terror of corporal punishment, to attend a worship which their consciences did not approve. Numbers collected in the county of Meath, seized the arms of many of the gentry, and swore them to the observance of a neutrality; but the arms thus collected, being insufficient, they commenced the fabrication of rude, and scarcely warlike weapons. The military soon attacked the largest body, which occupied the town of Athboy. The Rev. Mr. Butler, and a company of foot from Kells, first closed with the mob, but were compelled to retreat. The cavalry came up immediately after, and the mob dispersed. A few were seized, and at the ensuing assizes sentenced to be publicly whipped, and three years confinement; a sentence severely inflicted. In this affair, two of the military, and four or five of the peasantry were killed. To remove the fears of the catholics, some catholic officers were appointed, and the militia was embodied without further opposition.

The troubles in the North still raged. These

commenced so early as the year 1784; and arose, like many other tumultuary combinations, from mere accident. Two peasants, presbyterians, at Markethill, in the county of Armagh, in a state of intoxication, quarrelled and fought. The defeated vowed vengeance against a by-stander, a catholic, to whose advice he attributed his disgrace. The friends of each engaged in the quarrel, and the spirit of discord spread from families to villages. Markets, horse-races, and shebeen-houses were, for some time, the theatre of their malignant warfare; but the party of the vanquished appointed a leader, and assumed the name of the Nappach-fleet. This body soon commenced night attacks on the persons and property of their opponents. These formed a counter-association, in the neighbourhood of Bunker's-hill, chose a presbyterian for their captain, and assumed the denomination of Defenders. They were joined by another body from Hamilton's-bawn, stiled the Bawn-fleet, who were equally in dread of the Peep-of-day-boys, or Nappach-fleet. These tumultuous bodies, on Whitsun-Monday, 1785, determined to decide their differences in the field. The Nappach-fleet, 700 strong, well armed, were drawn up opposite the Bawn-fleet and Defenders, more numerous, indeed, but greatly inferior in arms; when the timely arrival of John Richardson, Esq. of Rich-hill, member of parliament for the county of Armagh, the Rev. Mr. Barker, of Market-hill, and Mr. Dobbin, of the Waste-land, near Hamilton's-bawn, prevented these deluded men from

weltering in each other's blood. These gentlemen jointly addressed each party, entreated them to disperse, and live in peace; explained to them the consequences that would attend their non-compliance; and had the satisfaction to behold their labours crowned with success; each party returning peaceably to their respective homes. But when once associations of this sort are formed, discord, revenge, even frolic, carries them beyond their original intention, and leads them into new mischief. Accident added the flame of religious dissension, and the warfare increased, under the banners of catholic and protestant. Adam Oliver, a young man, a protestant, on his death-bed sent for a priest, and died a catholic. Shortly after, a halfpenny or penny squib appeared, stating, in substance, the following reason, among others, for his conversion: "That he was favoured with a vision of the world to come, in which he saw none but catholics admitted into heaven, while protestants and sinners were conveyed in an opposite direction." Having seen so much in the year 1787, I viewed it as a most inflammatory, dangerous pasquinade, whether founded in fact or otherwise. The priest, under whose name it was issued, never published a disavowal or retraction. Perhaps he never saw it, as it was circulated in the most contemptible manner, among the lowest classes of the northern weavers, for a trifle, a halfpenny or a penny at most. Certainly the priest's sister, who lived with him when the first of these sulphurous squibs ap-

peared, positively denied that her brother wrote or published them, several years afterwards, in a conversation I had with her on the subject. A sermon was subsequently preached by the Rev. Dr. Crawley, on the death of a young woman, who had left a small legacy to the parish-priest. High-mass, which was also offered for the soul of the deceased, being seldom celebrated in that county, induced many persons, of different creeds, to be present at the solemnity. His animadversions on the Reformation were much censured by those of a different persuasion present; and the multiplied misrepresentations of it, caused the priest to print it. A reply then appeared, in the name of the parish clerk, containing the most provoking abuse of the catholic doctrine, discipline and worship. This, like that of Adam Oliver, circulated at a trifle. These were followed by a series of controversial squibs, penned not in the most polished or conciliating stile. As usual with ignorant disputants, they contained more abuse than argument; more falsification than illustration. These combustibles fell into the hands of the lower orders, and, in conjunction with captain whiskey, kindled abundance of fiery, unchristian zeal. When arguments failed, they set about to determine the controversy with fisty-cuffs and buille vatte. They did not long confine their impious zeal to sheebeen-houses; they fought for the love of God, and the pre-eminence of their respective creeds, at markets and fairs, and their warfare was, for some time, as nearly balanced as their folly. But the Peep-

of-day-boys, availing themselves of the laws against papists having arms, paid early visits to their houses, seized whatever arms they found, and frequently ill treated the inmates. The first company of Armagh volunteers issued a manifesto against these practices, and declared their intention of protecting the catholics; yet the disturbances extended to different parts of the county: the fury of these fanatics seemed levelled against all catholics, and the defenders retaliated, sometimes on the innocent. Combinations were also formed for mutual injury; the defenders engaged not to purchase goods from a protestant, who should abet the peep-of-day-boys, and they determined not to traffic with a papist. In this state of irritation, on old May-day, 1788, a great number of the defenders, with many protestants, and the band of the 13th regiment at their head, walked in procession from Blackwatertown to the Moy. The garrison of Charlemont granted them leave to pass, and a mutual salute took place. This foolish parade excited great distrust of them; their numbers were magnified, and their intentions misrepresented. A party of volunteers, imagining the fort of Charlemont would be attacked, joined the garrison, and additional companies of volunteers were formed, for the preservation of public tranquillity. The raising of these companies was some check to the nocturnal depredations; yet, as catholics were not admitted, the defenders considered them an omen of their destruction. Occasional conflicts took place between them, the volunteers, and the peep-

of-day-boys. The governor of the county, the earl of Charlemont, and the grand jury now published a manifesto, prohibiting all papists from assembling in arms; and also persons from disarming them without legal authority. The unhappy differences, however, still increased. The protestants of the county of Armagh were of opinion, that the destruction of the protestant religion was the object of the defenders; and the defenders complained, that all their efforts to procure legal redress were unavailing; that their oppressors were rather countenanced than checked by the civil power; and that they were thus compelled to associate, for the purpose of self-defence. The grand jury and high-sheriff of the county of Armagh, in the spring assizes of 1791, resolved, that the system of illegal meetings among the Roman catholics was truly alarming, and offered five guineas reward for each of the first twenty persons convicted of illegally arming and assembling. The flame spread from Armagh to Louth, to Cavan and to Meath.

In proportion as this association extended itself into districts, where no protestants of inferior rank in life were to be found, and therefore no outrages like those of the peep-of-day-boys to be apprehended, it gradually lost its characteristic of being a religious feud, and became, in fact, an association for procuring a redress of the grievances of the very lowest orders. Even in the counties where it originated, it ceased to be actuated by religious animosity before the end of 1792, in consequence of the exertions of the

early United Irishmen, (whose chief endeavours were always directed to reconcile the protestants and catholics,) together with the influence of some liberal-minded men of both persuasions, and still more from the publications peculiarly adapted to that purpose, which were incessantly circulated through the medium of the Northern Star: for by these means the hatred of sects was lulled, until a subsequent period, when it will appear to have been aroused by fresh aggressions.

The defenders, after their association had changed its type, were bound together by oaths, obviously drawn up by illiterate men, different in various places, but all promising secrecy, and specifying whatever grievance was, in each place, most felt, and best understood. Tythes, therefore, were, in all of them, very prominent. The views of these men were far from being distinct; although they had a national notion, that "something ought to be done for Ireland," yet they were all agreed, that whatever was to be done should be accomplished by force of arms. They, therefore, formed themselves upon a military system; and, in order to procure arms, assembled by night, to take them from the houses of those who they conceived would be eventually their enemies.

These disturbances attracted the attention of the house of lords early in 1793, and a secret committee was appointed to inquire into their causes, to endeavour to discover their promoters, and to prevent their extension.

This committee, in the course of its proceedings, proposed questions, to which it required answers on oath, that might eventually have criminated the persons under examination. A knowledge of this fact had been obtained by the United Irishmen of Dublin, some of whom had been thus interrogated; they alleged, that the researches of the committee were not confined to the professed purpose of its institution, but directed principally to the discovery of evidence, in support of prosecutions, previously commenced, and utterly unconnected with the cause of the tumults it was appointed to investigate. They thereupon published a series of observations, calculated to show that the committee had no such right. They distinguished the legislative from the judicial capacity of the house of lords; denied its right to administer an oath in its legislative capacity; asserted, that, as a court, it was bound by those rules of justice which were obligatory on all other courts, both as to the limits of jurisdiction, and the mode of conducting inquiry; and further insisted, that these rules deprived it of all right to administer an oath, or exact an answer, in similar cases, or to delegate its judicial authority to a committee.

For this publication the chairman and secretary of the society, the Hon. Simon Butler and Mr. Oliver Bond, with whose names it was signed, were brought before the house on the 1st of March. They avowed the publication, and were, in consequence, sentenced by the lords to six months imprisonment, and a fine of £500

each. The society was not, however, deterred from espousing their cause. They were sumptuously entertained, as if in defiance of parliament, during the whole of that time, and their fines paid by the voluntary subscriptions of the United Irishmen.

Well calculated as was the sentence on these gentlemen, to prevent others from disputing the authority of the committee, yet it did not entirely succeed. Dr. Reynolds, a physician from the North, having been summoned before their lordships, professed his conviction of the truth of the observations published by the United Irishmen, and refused to be examined on oath. He was, therefore, committed, and imprisoned for near five months, till the expiration of the session; during which time he experienced the same attentions as were shown to Butler and Bond.

While the report of the secret committee was preparing, lively alarms were excited, and rumours were very current through the metropolis, that it would implicate many leading members of the catholic convention, even to capital punishment—cover the whole of that body with suspicion and odium; and hazard, if not defeat their bill, then only in progress. On the day when the report was expected, it was not made; a noble lord, however, sent a confidential and mutual friend to Mr. Sweetman, the secretary of the sub-committee, to inform him, that, should it appear his life would be exceedingly endangered, and the bill itself run a great risk; but that if he would sign any kind of paper, in the form and

wording most agreeable to his own feelings, acknowledging his indiscretion, and expressing his regret at having connected himself with the defenders, his lordship was authorised to say, the report should never see the light, and all difficulties respecting the pending law should be removed. This, Mr. Sweetman peremptorily refused; but offered, in consequence of the subsequent conversation, to call together the sub-committee, that it might receive any proposal his lordship should think fit to make to them. Accordingly in the course of half an hour they were collected in one room, while his lordship occupied that adjoining. He then offered to them, by means of his friend, the same benefits, if they would disavow their secretary. This they also refused: the report appeared the next day.

Its object was to connect the defenders with all that was obnoxious to administration; and principally to implicate the general committee, or at least the sub-committee of the catholics. This it attempted to do, by inference, from the secrecy and regularity of the defender system, which, it said, seemed as if directed by men of superior rank; from the collecting of money to a considerable amount by the voluntary subscription of catholics, in consequence of a circular letter from the sub-committee, expressing the necessity of raising a fund for defraying the heavy and growing expences incurred by the general committee, in conducting the affairs of their constituents; and lastly, from some letters written by Mr. Sweetman to a gentleman at Dun-

dalk, in which the report states, that the secretary, in the name of the sub-committee, directed inquiries to be made, touching the offences of which the defenders, then in confinement, were accused. One of these letters is given, dated 9th of August, 1792, which mentions, that the brother of a person, whom the secret committee states to have been committed as a defender, left town truly disconsolate at not being able to effect something towards the liberation of his kinsman. This chain of circumstantial evidence was strengthened by the assertion, that Mr. Sweetman's correspondent had employed, at considerable expence, an agent and counsel to act for several persons accused as defenders. The report seeming to presume, that the money used for that purpose was supplied by the catholic committee, and part of the voluntary subscription it had collected, has the candour to state, that nothing appeared before the secret committee, which could lead it to believe, that the body of the catholics were concerned in promoting these disturbances, or privy to this application of their money. The secret committee then couples (but only by the insinuation which results from juxtaposition in their report) the defenders with the volunteers, the reformers and republicans in the North and in Dublin.

This attack on the organ and adherents of the catholics having been generally conceived as aimed in hostility against the bill then depending for their relief, no time was lost in counter-acting its effects. A reply to it appeared almost

directly from the sub-committee, and another from the secretary. The defence by the former stated, that while the religious quarrels were going on between the peep-of-day-boys and the defenders, in consequence of personal application from several protestant gentlemen, three of the committee had an interview in July, 1792, at Rathfryland, in the county of Down, with above twenty respectable protestant gentlemen of that neighbourhood, who admitted, that in no one instance had the catholics been the aggressors; but, on the contrary, had been repeatedly attacked, even in the solemn offices of their religion and burial of their dead. At this interview it was further stated to have been agreed, that the committee should use all its influence with the lower orders of catholics, to induce them to desist from their meetings; and that the volunteers should adopt resolutions, expressing their determination to protect every man equally, without distinction of party or religion. In order to effectuate this agreement, the general committee framed a circular address to that district, stating the agreement and the determination of the volunteers: " Entreating the lower orders of catholics to abstain from parade and meetings, and all other measures that might tend to alarm their protestant brethren; pointing out the embarrassment that would necessarily be thrown in the way of the great catholic objects, by any thing of riot, tumult, or disorder; promising to those who should observe the peaceable demeanour recommended by that address, all possible protec-

tion, as well by applications to government, as by supporting, at the common expence, the cause of those, who, if attacked in their houses, property or persons, should dutifully appeal to the law of the land for redress, where circumstances might not enable them to seek for that protection themselves; but, that the general committee would, in no case, undertake the defence of any man who should assist in any riotous or disorderly meeting, or should not behave himself soberly, peaceably and honestly." The defence further stated, that this address, and the resolutions of the volunteers, restored peace and harmony to that part of the country, which had been harrassed for many years before. It likewise mentioned, that the person alluded to in Mr. Sweetman's letter, was recommended by that gentleman's commercial correspondent, as coming within the description of those whom the committee had promised to support; which, on examining his brother, there was found cause to doubt, and, on that account, all advice and assistance were refused. The sub-committee then solemnly asserted, that this was the only instance of their ever having had any kind of communication with the defenders. As to the levying of money, it specified the different expences which had been incurred in pursuing the catholic claims, and the necessity of voluntary contributions for their discharge. It also denied, that any part of them was ever applied to any other purpose. Mr. Sweetman's refutation dwelt on the same topics, and entered into a minute detail of his communi-

cations with his commercial correspondent, the gentleman alluded to in the report of the secret committee. Notwithstanding the alarms that had been excited previous to the publication of the report, no attempt was made to proceed against any of the sub-committee or its secretary; and it was declared by the earl of Portarlington, one of the committee who framed the report, in the debate on the catholic bill, that the catholic body had no concern whatever in the disturbances created by some of their brethren in the North.

The Roman catholics, sensible of the calumnies attempted to be affixed to them, gave the utmost publicity to their real sentiments, by the following admonition, composed and signed by the Rev. Dr. Troy, Dr. O'Reilly, Dr. Bray, Dr. Bellew, and Dr. Cruise, which was read on Sunday after each mass in Dublin; and copies of it sent all over the kingdom.

Dublin, January 25, 1793.

Dear Christians—It has been our constant practice, as it is our indispensable duty, to exhort you to manifest on all occasions, that unshaken loyalty to his majesty, and obedience to the laws, which the principles of our holy religion inspire and command. This loyalty and obedience have ever peculiarly distinguished the Roman catholics of Ireland. We do not conceive a doubt of their being actuated at the present by the same sentiments; but think it necessary to observe, that a most lively gratitude to our beloved sovereign should render their loyalty and love of order, if possible, more conspicuous. Our gracious king, the common father of all his people, has, with peculiar energy, recommended his faithful Roman catholic subjects of this kingdom to the wisdom and liberality of our enlightened parliament. How can we, dear christians, express our heartfelt acknowledgments for this signal and unprecedented instance of royal benevolence

and condescension! Words are insufficient; but your continued loyal and peaceable conduct will more effectually proclaim them, and in a manner equally, if not more satisfactory and pleasing to his majesty and parliament. Avoid then, we conjure you, dearest brethren, every appearance of riot; attend to your industrious pursuits for the support and comfort of your families; fly from idle assemblies; abstain from the intemperate use of spirituous and intoxicating liquors; practice the duties of our holy religion: this conduct, so pleasing to heaven, will also prove the most powerful recommendation of your present claims, to our amiable sovereign, to both houses of parliament, to the magistrates, and to all our well-meaning fellow-subjects of every description. None but the evil-minded can rejoice at your being concerned in any disturbance.

We cannot but declare our utmost and conscientious detestation and abhorrence of the enormities lately committed, by seditious and misguided wretches of every religious denomination, in some counties of this kingdom: they are enemies to God and man, the outcasts of society, and a disgrace to christianity: we consider the Roman catholics amongst them, unworthy of the appellation; whether acting for themselves, or seduced to outrage by the arts of designing enemies to us, and to national prosperity, intimately connected with our emancipation. Offer your prayers, dearest brethren, to the Father of mercy, that he may inspire these deluded people with sentiments becoming christians and good subjects; supplicate the Almighty Ruler and Disposer of empires, [By whom kings reign, and law-givers decree just things, Prov. viii. 15.] to direct his majesty's councils, and forward his benevolent intention to unite all his Irish subjects in bonds of common interest, and common endeavours for the preservation of peace and good order, and for every purpose tending to increase and secure national prosperity.

Beseech the Throne of Mercy, also, to assist both houses of parliament in their important deliberations; that they may be distinguished by consummate wisdom and liberality, for the advantage of the kingdom, and the relief and happiness of his majesty's subjects.

Under the pleasing expectation of your chearful compliance with these, our earnest solicitations, we sincerely wish you

every blessing in this life, and everlasting happiness in the next, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

In order to remove the objections, however unfounded, which had been made to the oath taken by the catholic bishops at their consecration, the catholic archbishops addressed a letter to the pope, wherein they described the misrepresentations that had been recently published of their consecration oath, and great injury to the catholic body arising from them: they expressed their fullest conviction, that the oath, obliging them only to canonical obedience to his holiness, and communion with the centre of unity, was perfectly reconcileable with their loyalty as subjects, and the allegiance they had sworn to their gracious sovereign, king George III. They professed a determination to observe both oaths, and to preserve their communion with the holy see inviolate: reflecting, however, on the ignorance of most protestants respecting the oath, with which they seemed only acquainted from the calumnious publications against it, the prelates above-mentioned suggested to the pope, that some declaration or explanation of the oath, and particularly of the words, "*Hæreticos persequor et impugnabo*," from himself, or by his authority, would, probably, remove the alarms of well-meaning protestants, and confound the prejudiced; who, by their misrepresentations of the oath, endeavoured to blast the prospects and expectations of the catholics to obtain an emancipation from the penal code; which they had reason to hope for, from the clemency of his

majesty, and wisdom of the legislature. They concluded, with submitting these considerations to his holiness, and requesting an answer, whenever his constant solicitude for the universal church, and occupations would permit.

To this letter an answer was returned from Rome by the congregation of cardinals appointed to superintend the ecclesiastical affairs of these kingdoms, intimating, amongst other things, that, by authority of his holiness, an alteration was to be made in the oath, of which alteration the following is a translation.

From an audience had of his holiness on the 9th day of June, 1791.

The archbishops metropolitans of the kingdom of Ireland represented to his holiness, that, from the ignorance or malice of some persons, certain expressions in the form of the oath prescribed in the Roman ritual to be taken by bishops at their consecration, and by archbishops on receiving the pall, have been misrepresented; which has added new perplexities to those which they daily experience in a kingdom, where the catholic faith is not the religion of the state: wherefore, they humbly requested, if it should appear expedient to his holiness, that he would vouchsafe to apply a remedy by some act of his apostolical vigilance. His holiness, on this report being made to him by me, the underwritten, all circumstances of the case maturely considered, was graciously pleased to grant, that the bishops of the kingdom of Ireland at their consecration, and the archbishops on receiving the pall, may use the same form of oath which was taken by the archbishop of Mohilow, in the empire of the Moscovites, by permission of his said holiness; which is as follows:

I N. N. &c. as in the Roman Pontifical to the clause, *All heretics, schismatics and rebels against our said lord and his successors aforesaid, I will, to the utmost of my power, prosecute and oppose*, which is entirely omitted: afterwards the words, *The Cardinal Prefect of the S. Con-*

gregation for propagating the Faith, are substituted, instead of The Cardinal Proponent in the Congregation of the Sacred Council. The form concludes with these words, I will observe all and every one of these things the more inviolably, as I am firmly convinced, that there is nothing contained in them, which can be contrary to the fidelity I owe to the most serene king of Great Britain and Ireland, and to his successors to the throne. So help me God and those holy Gospels of God. Thus I promise, and engage.

I, N. N. archbishop, or bishop, &c.

Dated at Rome, in the house of the Sacred Congregation, the 23d day of June, 1791,

L. Cardinal Antonelli, *Prefect.*

A. Archbishop Adanen, *Sec.*

Soon after the catholic bill received the royal assent, the general committee met on the 25th of April, 1793. After expressing its thankfulness to the king for his interposition on behalf of its constituents, and voted some substantial and honourable proofs of its gratitude to individuals, who had laboured in the catholic cause, it directed its attention towards one of the most degrading and deleterious consequences of the lately repealed popery laws; and appointed a committee to consult, communicate and correspond upon the means of procuring a system of improved education for the catholic youth of Ireland. The general committee further signalised itself by marking, in its last moments, its attachment to the entirely unaccomplished object for which the protestant reformers were so anxious. It “most earnestly exhorted the catholics of Ireland to co-operate with their protestant brethren, in all legal and constitutional means to carry into effect that

great measure, recognised by the wisdom of parliament, and so essential to the freedom, happiness and prosperity of Ireland, a reform of the representation of the people in the commons house." Having done this, it dissolved itself; since, by the restoration of the elective franchise, the catholics of Ireland were enabled to speak individually the language of freemen, and that they no longer wished to be considered as a distinct body of his majesty's subjects.

The persons to whom the general committee entrusted the formation of a plan for the education of the youth of their religion, had determined, that while it embraced the catholic youth, it should not exclude those of any other persuasion; that it should depend on the people for its support, and be subject to the joint controul of the clergy and laity. They had received assurances, that there would be no deficiency of ample resources to carry it into effect. Some of the catholic prelates even made very considerable offers of pecuniary aid. This system of popular education, totally unconnected with government, appears not to have been completely agreeable at the castle. Its inclinations were conveyed to the prelates; and an arrangement made for catholic education, solely conducted by the bishops, under the auspices of government, and the sanction of parliament. The gentlemen, who were preparing the popular plan, were assured they might desist from their labours, and the general system of education was, consequently, abandoned.

To the hostility of the penal laws succeeded

the hostility of administration. Admission was refused to the most eminent merchants of the metropolis, into the guild of merchants, chiefly by the dependents of government; and an irreligious distinction created, more mortifying to the catholic than the penal code itself.

Public attention was also occupied by the distresses of traders and manufacturers, particularly in the cotton line, who were reduced to great embarrassments by the first consequences of the war. Their warehouses were overstocked with goods, which they were unable to send to any market; they, therefore, became incompetent to answer the demands for which they were responsible, and the workmen were reduced to the greatest distress for want of employment. The immediate pressure of this calamity was wisely removed, and credit greatly restored, by advances from government, to such persons as could deposit goods to a sufficient amount, or produce equivalent security. The sum of £200,000 was entrusted to the management of commissioners, who granted out of it, to the different claimants, such sums as they judged necessary.

The session of parliament terminated on the 16th of August. Exclusive of the act for the relief of the Roman catholics, and the act against conventions, the following were passed: an act to encourage the improvement of barren land; another to prevent traitorous correspondence with his majesty's enemies; an act re-vesting in his majesty the estates forfeited in 1688, yet remaining unsold; an act for the trial of treason com-

mitted out of the king's dominions; an act to remove doubts respecting the functions of juries in cases of libel; an act for securing the freedom and independence of the house of commons; an act for regulating the trade of Ireland to and from the East Indies; and an act for the advancement of trade and manufactures.

The spirit of reform, which had been strongly manifested in the north of Ireland and the metropolis, was considerably checked, by the coercive measures of government, and the system adopted by the republic of France. The open mockery of christianity, the profession of deism, was detested by the people of Ireland, who always cherished and respected religion. The murder of the sovereign, the massacre of the clergy, the carnage committed by revolutionary tribunals, the tyranny exercised by the committee of public safety, the defection of the generals, civil dissensions and foreign wars; these crimes and evils, committed and suffered by France, were represented by the opponents of reform, as essentially connected with the march of democracy; and strongly co-operated with the measures of government, in compelling the friends of reform to wait a favourable opportunity, when public reason and public strength should be restored.

The account of these excesses was received by the generality of the Irish with abhorrence. It shocked their most cherished prejudices in a tenderly, sensible part; and, in proportion as protestants appeared to rejoice, catholics lamented those deplorable transactions, that disgraced and

threatened downfall to their religion, where it appeared most secure, honoured and established. While suffering for their profession at home, vilified and trampled by divers pains and penalties, it was some consolation to hear of its being professed and protected by the most powerful monarchy in Christendom. Its temporary prostration was heard as afflicting news, a heart-felt sore. Neither were the means nor the instruments, employed in the overthrow of the throne and the altar, of a nature to mitigate the painful sensations excited thereby. They bore too great resemblance to the sanguinary tragedies of the seventeenth century in these islands, still fresh in remembrance, and felt in their oppressive consequences, not to embitter the reflections they led to. Irreligion, profanation and sacrilege, were but ill calculated to excite the sympathy, or win the affections of a religious people, attached to their tenets with a warmth commensurate with their sufferings for the same, and the natural fire of their temperament. These excesses also spoke forcibly to the passions, and aroused the exertions of the aristocracy to stifle the expression of sentiments favourable to freedom. The grand lodge of Irish free-masons yielded to this influence, and on the 3d of January, 1793, issued the following admonition to masonic lodges, prohibiting them from discussing and publishing their opinions on religious and political subjects.

The grand lodge of Ireland, as the constituted authority and guardians of the craft, deem it incumbent on them, to

remind the respective lodges of this kingdom, that it is utterly inconsistent with the fundamental principles, the ancient charges, and the uniform practices of free-masons, to permit any discussions or publications on religious or political subjects among them; because these, of all others, are known to arouse the worst passions of men, and excite among the kindest brethren the most rancorous and lasting animosities. True masonry prefers no sect, and acknowledges no party. A mason's religion is the faithful worship of God; his politics a strict obedience to the laws of the country in which he resides, and a most cordial and unremitting attachment to his sovereign.

Free-masons have sufficient opportunities of expressing their religious and political opinions in other societies and in other capacities, and should not, under any pretence whatsoever, suffer such topics to invade the sacred retirement of a lodge, which is peculiarly appropriated to improve moral duties, correct human frailties, and inculcate social happiness.

The grand lodge, therefore, in discharge of their duty, and actuated by the most anxious solicitude for the prosperity, honour and unanimity of the whole masonic body of Ireland, earnestly exhort and require all the lodges of this kingdom to refrain from religious and political discussions, and publications on such subjects.

Little remarkable occurred in the short session of 1794. The opposition, in almost every case, melted itself down into the common mass of ministerial advocates. The first motion was made by Mr. Grattan, on the 20th of February, for equalizing the duties, payable in the ports of Great Britain and Ireland, on the imported manufactures of each respectively. What proposition more reasonable? yet the secretary of state moved the previous question, and Mr. Grattan declined pressing his motion, lest a distraction of sentiment should seem to exist in the house. Mr. Duquerry's state of the trade of

Ireland, nevertheless, deserves insertion. He said, " The right hon. gentleman who had proposed the resolution, had brought it forward with that temperance, and accurate knowledge of the subject, becoming the representative of the first city in the kingdom. The right hon. member was one, who deserved the gratitude of the country, and he was sure no idle compliment from either one side of the house or the other, would make him swerve from his duty. But he professed himself astonished at the conduct of a right hon. gentleman on the opposite side of the bench, (secretary Douglas,) in moving the previous question, on a proposition for opening the ports of Great Britain to the manufactures of Ireland. He was sorry it did not occur to the noble lord, who preceded him in office, to move the previous question on the India bill. He was sure none of the members, who attended the debate on that bill, could forget the expressions of the noble lord, then ostensible minister, that, if the house consented to the act like men of honour, and like Irishmen, he was sure British magnanimity would not hesitate to concede equality of commerce. He recollected well the noble lord said, that he could not deliver the sentiments of the British cabinet on the subject; but if, in our concession of the India trade, nothing of a petty bargain should appear, he was sure every reasonable request of Ireland would be acceded to by Great Britain. The right hon. gentleman, who has succeeded him, now tells the house, the question has become irritating in the sister country;

Great Britain, however, was not irritated when we surrendered up to her the India trade.

“ Will any man tell this house, that Great Britain is of so haughty a character, that she must be fawned upon, and courted to do justice? He did not blame the right hon. gentleman for moving the question of adjournment. From his manner, he seemed to do it with regret and concern. He considered him only as the commissioner of the British cabinet, in whose councils he did not share, and who is only to execute their orders as directed. It would be, therefore, unjust to attach any blame to him. If the house should accede to the resolution, we would not thereby get the British tariff: it must be considered first by the parliament of England; and, if it appeared improper to them, they would stop it in limine. In voting for the resolution, the house would give to the British parliament an opportunity of discussing the question, and of exposing that commercial folly, which, it was said, existed. He thought, therefore, they ought not adjourn the question, until a comprehension of mind was restored to the people of Great Britain.

“ He did not doubt but Great Britain had a regard for Ireland! She ought to have it. If she had been formerly impressed with the same sentiments, she would, at the present day, be the most powerful empire on earth. At that inauspicious period, when the woollen trade of Ireland was surrendered to British monopoly, there were but thirty-four gentlemen in this house to come forward in behalf of their country: and, if the

house should this night vote for the question of adjournment, he did not think they would be much better. He could not help impressing on the mind of the right hon. gentleman the injustice of admitting France to commercial advantages from which Ireland is excluded. To give an idea of the commercial disadvantages under which Ireland labours, in her intercourse with England, it might not be unnecessary to state a few items from the tariffs of both countries. How then stand the tariffs on woollen cloths, or what is called old drapery? In Great Britain there is an import duty of forty shillings and six pence per yard on Irish woollens, while the duty on English woollens, imported into Ireland, amounts to no more than fifty pence per yard! On woollen stuffs and mixed goods, or what is called new drapery, the same system of hostility to the manufactures of Ireland has been followed by the parliament of Great Britain. The import duty from Ireland into England is six shillings per yard; and from Great Britain here only three halfpence! Cotton goods were admitted here at a duty of 10 per cent.; in England the duty is 30 per cent. Printed linens, notwithstanding all that is said of the protection afforded by Great Britain to the linen manufacture of Ireland, are subject to an import duty there of 65 per cent., while here they are admitted at 10 per cent. One manufacture has been considered sufficient for upwards of four million of people; but, he would beg to know, was not such a disproportion of duties calculated to destroy even that? Ireland

had not been more than thirty years in possession of the manufacture of printed linens, when England laid on a heavier duty, to enable her to rival us. After trying the experiment, she found she could not; and, the consequence was, that the trade went into the hands of the Germans, the Hollanders, and the Swiss. Thus the trade was lost to Ireland, without being the smallest advantage to Great Britain. The manufacture of sail-cloth, in like manner, was rising in this country, about the year 1750, to a very flourishing state, until checked by the monopolizing spirit of England; which, however, has not been productive to the latter nation of any advantage. So that Ireland might, with respect to these particulars, tell Great Britain, ‘you have robbed us of that which not enriched you, but makes us poor indeed.’

“When, in the year 1785, this nation was given to understand, that a commercial adjustment with Great Britain was about to take place, £140,000 annually, of new taxes, were imposed on that presumption; and, to this day, the nation remains without any equivalent. We cheerfully acceded, last sessions of parliament, to the monopoly of the India company for twenty-one years; and, at that time, the noble lord, who conducted the affairs of government, said the accommodation should take place.

“He made no doubt but some gentlemen would be highly gratified that the session should pass over without any debate: these might, however, find themselves disappointed. Nations were

born to assist nations, in like manner as men were born to assist men; and the more exactly Great Britain and Ireland squared their reciprocal commercial and political intercourse by this maxim, the more prosperous would be the common affairs of both. England was peculiarly adapted to the manufacture of fine woollen cloths, and might, therefore, leave to Ireland the advantages on coarse. It begins now to be known, that the spirit of monopoly is as injurious to trade, as that of conquest is to the happiness of society. It is better for mankind to assist than destroy each other. The tendency to the former is natural to the human heart, and is done by the wisdom of God; the latter proceeds only from the depraved policy of man. The consequence of depriving Ireland of the woollen manufacture was, to throw that trade directly into the hands of France, to the detriment of Great Britain. Sir Matthew Decker, than whom no higher authority on the subject of trade can be adduced, is of opinion, that the rivalry of France would not have become so formidable to Great Britain, but for the restrictions laid on the woollen trade of Ireland: and, if the two nations would not suffer themselves to be divided in sentiment, on account of the narrow gut of ocean which separates them, they would both become more great and prosperous. This session a great subsidy had been voted to Great Britain, for the purpose of carrying on the war with the greater effect. Are we then to be joined in war with Great Britain, but excluded from her commerce? The linen manu-

facture may, perhaps, be sufficient for Ulster; but is Munster to droop in poverty? He entertained too high an opinion of the British ministers, to think they would yield to the folly of the manufacturers, or be thereby induced to postpone measures, which, they must be convinced, are for the common interest of the empire. When a commercial adjustment was in discussion in the year 1785, the British manufacturers only mentioned their doubts to the ministry, with respect to the manufactures of glass, pottery, and a few other trifling articles. He would be glad to know, what new circumstance had produced the present alleged irritation? The resolution proposed by the right hon. gentleman did not go to agitate any political question. It went only to procure the British duties to be lowered to the Irish tariff, which must be finally adjusted in the parliament of Great Britain: and he thought that, in voting the resolution, we were but doing our duty as the representatives of Ireland."

The only instance where opposition seemed to assume any thing of its former tone, was, in the debate upon Mr. Ponsonby's reform bill, on the 4th of March; but even then that party was particularly careful to mark its abhorrence of democracy, of French principles, and universal suffrage. Sir Laurence Parsons, indeed, very strikingly pointed out what he called the imposture and mockery of the existing representation. "When the Americans were deliberating," said he, "on their new constitution, if any one had got up among them, and had proposed such an

institution as our present borough representation, and had said, there is a certain ruin in Virginia, let it send two representatives, to be named by any twelve persons Mr. Washington shall appoint; and there is a certain tree in Pennsylvania, let it send two representatives, to be named by any twelve persons Mr. Franklin shall appoint; and so on. Would not the man have been deemed mad, who made such a proposition? An institution, then, which any rational set of men upon earth would deem a man mad for having proposed, can it be sound sense in you to retain?"

Mr. Grattan too, among other arguments in support of the plan before the house, asserted, that ninety, or, as he believed, about forty individuals, returned a vast majority in the house of commons. "Of property," said he, "it will be found, that those who return that majority, (it is, I believe, two-thirds,) have not an annual income of three hundred thousand pounds, while they give and grant above three millions; that is, the taxes they give are ten times, and the property they tax is infinitely greater than the property they represent." But his speech was most particularly remarkable for a series of epigrammatic invectives against the society of United Irishmen of Dublin, their plan of reform,* and the principle of universal suffrage.

"Worse even than the abuses so defended," said he, "is a plan I have seen for their reformation, personal or individual representation.

* For this plan of reform, see p. 414, &c. of this volume,

“ The principle of such a plan is a complete, avowed, and unqualified departure from the vital and fundamental article of the British constitution, in practice and in theory; and I must say, such an outset requires no small degree of mischievous and senseless temerity. With equal folly does this plan violate the dearest rights of man, for if there be one right of man entirely indisputable, it is that which gives to the individual in particular, and the community in general, the fruits of his and their industry; thus the passenger through your field, or the labourer on your farm, has no right to make rules for the management of the same, nor have the aggregate of labourers or of non-proprietors a right to make rules or ordinances for the land, farms, or trade of the community.

“ This reasoning applies very strongly to the case of Ireland, because it appeared on the hearth-money survey of the last year, that those who were to be exempted from the hearth-money for want of property were more than half of our inhabitants. It was, besides, insisted upon by the objectors to reform on the principle of property, that such a principle excluded the majority; it follows, that the plan, which gives votes to all the inhabitants, and gives away to that majority the fruits of the industry of the community, gives away the estate of the landholder, the farm of the freeholder, the lease of the leaseholder, and the trade of the citizen, to be ordered and disposed of by a majority, who are confessed to have neither estate, nor farm, nor lease, nor

trade. That is the plan that robs the individual and the community of the fruits of their industry, and destroys the representation of property. Under the pretence of establishing a representation of existence, it destroys a principle which is real and sacred, to establish a concert which is affected and nonsensical.

“ But it is not merely to those who have neither farm, freehold, nor trade, that this plan extends the right of voting; it gives the return of members to serve in parliament to all the common soldiers, to the resident army, horse, foot and dragoons; to the police, to the scavenger. It goes farther, it gives that right to all hospitals, to almsmen, to Channel-row, and every beggarman in the kingdom of Ireland. It goes farther, it gives that right to every criminal, white-boys that break laws, and defenders who steal arms; and would thus present you with a representation of felony as well as of paupers. To such a monstrous constitution, whose frenzy, folly and wickedness must excite at once your scorn and horror, the objection is not merely that such persons would be represented, but the persons who have no property in land, lease, freehold, or trade, being confessedly the majority, it follows under such a plan, that such persons alone would be represented, and that the landholder, leaseholder, farmer and tradesman, confessedly the minority with their one vote only, this plan allows them no more, would not be represented at all; it follows, that those who have nothing in land, lease, farm, or trade, would return the parlia-

ment; that is, those who had nothing in the common stock would make the laws, and the men who receive alms would vote the taxes.

“ To destroy the influence of landed property is the object of individual representation, but its immediate effect would be to extinguish the people. The rich might, for a time, make a struggle; they might, in some places, buy a mob, who by such a plan would be all electors; they might beset the hustings with their retainers, who by such a plan would be all electors, or they might purchase the votes of that great body of electors introduced by such a plan into the constitution, all the beggars in the neighbourhood. The minister too, for the short time such a plan suffered king or minister, could, in the corrupt confusion of such election, preserve some influence by the application of the treasury and the command of the army, he could have all the swords and votes of all the common soldiers. But the farmer and the citizen could have none of those advantages, and, indeed, what farmer or citizen would go to the hustings of a medley of offenders met on a plan, where bayonets, bludgeons and whiskey elected the house of commons? In the mean time, the respect which the landlord and candidate now pay to the farmer and to the citizen would be at an end, and instead of resorting to the farmer for his vote and interest, the squire would go to the farmer's dung-yard and canvas the boys of his lawn, who would have more votes, though neither farm nor freehold; the consequence of the citizen would be at an

end also, and instead of going to his shop to ask the tradesman for his vote, the candidate would apply to the beggar on the bridge, or the scavenger in the kennel, or to the hospitals or Channel-row, and those places where the poor are now wisely supplied with bread, instead of being intoxicated with hand-bills, offering, in the place of bread, the hopes of returning the parliament, and becoming a third constitutive part of the legislature.

“ Such would be the state of election under this plan of personal representation, which from a revolution of power would speedily lead to a revolution of property, and become a plan of plunder as well as a scene of confusion; for if you transfer the power of the state to those who have nothing in the country, they will afterwards transfer the property, and annex it once more to the power in their own persons; give them your power and they will give themselves your property; of such a representation as this plan would provide, the first ordinance would be robbery, accompanied with the circumstance incidental to robbery, murder.”

The United Irishmen immediately attempted to justify their plan of reform, by the following address to the people of Ireland.

The society of United Irishmen in Dublin to the people of Ireland.

We submitted to your consideration such a plan for your equal representation, as would, in our judgment, if carried into effect, give you your just and constitutional weight in the legislature. We exulted in the thought, that our exer-

tions had contributed to raise the public mind to that elevated point, from which it might view its widely extended rights; from which it might discover the real insignificance of every proposal towards reform, that should not seek the full measure of justice; which should not give to all, who were in any degree bound by the law, the power of choosing those who made the law. We thought the simplicity of the plan the best test of its honesty, and that its appeal to the common sense of the nation rendered any explanation of its principles unnecessary. We are, however, now called upon to justify its primary principle by the objections which have since been raised against it; and, should we succeed, our triumph must be that of argument over invective; of reason over prejudice; and of justice over power.

It is an apprehension with some, that should every man be allowed to vote for a representative in parliament, the monarchy and the aristocracy of the constitution would soon be overborne and destroyed by the exorbitant power and republican spirit of the democracy.

Let it be remembered, that the British constitution has amply provided against the probability of such an event. It has appointed a sole executive officer, invested with prerogatives to strengthen that executive power, and with a certain portion of legislative authority to defend those prerogatives. It has instituted a substantial aristocracy, not deriving all its weight and authority merely from the king's patents, but hereditary, and possessing a mass of property, by which, backed and supported, if necessary, by the executive prerogatives and legislative authority of the crown, it is enabled to withstand the attacks of the democracy. Away then with the idle apprehension. Can any danger attach upon so much influence and so much power? On the contrary, can any thing short of pure democracy maintain against them the integrity and independence of the house of commons?

But it is said, that the lower classes of the community being without property, have no stake in the country, and, therefore, ought not to vote for any part of the legislature. In consequence of the representative system, every man is supposed to be either individually, or by his delegate, a party to making the laws by which he is to be bound. The elective right cannot, therefore, be denied, on constitutional prin-

ciple, to any one, and even the poorest should be allowed the exercise of that right, as they are bound by law as well as others. Laws operate on life, liberty and property. Why is property represented? Because it is valuable to the possessor, and may be affected by the law. Why should liberty and life not be represented? Are they not more valuable to their possessor, and may they not also be affected by the law? Since liberty and life are the most important objects of legislation, the poorer class have a right to some controul over the legislature, and it is just that they should exercise it. The spirit of many of our laws is aristocratic, and by no means calculated for the protection of the poor. To pass over the remarkable instances of the game-laws and the stamp-act, the latter of which, by operating on legal proceeding, shuts the door of justice against the poor, we shall refer to a much more important system, our criminal code.

If the lower classes of the community had been represented in parliament, when their necessities first urged them to insurrection and outrage, under the denomination of white-boys and defenders, parliament would have inquired into and redressed their grievances, instead of making laws to punish them with death. The acts, which are prohibited by many of our laws, are unquestionably great crimes; but the punishments, inflicted by those laws, are still greater crimes. The reason of this disproportion is, that the rich man is never guilty of sheep-stealing, and the poor man has no one to plead his cause in the senate.

If, however, it be a principle, that no man who does not contribute to the support of government, should be immediately concerned in legislation, such principle would be no exclusion of the poor, for they contribute in proportion to their means.

The poorest man in the land pays taxes for his fire, his candle, for his potatoes and clothing; and the poorer he is, the greater occasion he has for a vote, to protect what little he has, which is necessary not to his qualification merely, but to his very existence. He has a property in his labour, and in the value it will bring in the market, the field, or the manufactory; a property, on account of its smallness, of more real value to him than thousands of pounds to the rich and luxurious; a property, which must render him more in-

interested in the honest disposal of the public money, since one additional tax may crush him, than those can be who receive that public money by virtue of places without employment, and pensions without merit.

Property is merely the collection of labour; it possesses the very same qualities before as after it is collected into a heap, and the scattered labour of the lowest ranks is as real, and ought to be as really represented, as the most fixed and solid property. Reason, we think, says this; and sad experience has manifested, that giving political power exclusively to property collected, not to the mass of living labour, has been, in all ages, and particularly in modern times, the true cause of feudality, of vassalage, and of aristocratic despotism.

It is also used as an argument, that although in theory every man has a right to vote, yet the exercise of that right among us would be impracticable, or attended with outrage from the multitude of voters. To that we answer, that the practicability of the measure depends on a few regulations, which we apprehend, can be easily contrived to render elections practicable and tranquil. Let there be a division of the kingdom into parts, sufficiently small, and, as nearly as possible, equal with respect to population, and let the several elections annually commence and conclude throughout the kingdom on one and the same day.

Some friends to universal suffrage in a new country, urge a local objection to its being applied to Ireland. They say, that the lower classes of people in this country are peculiarly unfit for the exercise of suffrage, on account of their extreme ignorance. We know of no description of people unfit for the exercise of their rights; and, if we did, we would fit them for it by giving it to them. What has made those classes so extremely ignorant? The privation of those rights, which, if enjoyed, would have procured them knowledge. Apply the reverse of that which has debased, and it will exalt them. Give them the elective franchise, and let them exercise it immediately. It is not just to judge of what the people would be, when embodied into the constitution of their country, from their present state of debasement, in which they feel themselves unconnected with it. We trust that our countrymen, even the poorest, who are now stigmatized with the appellations of swine, wretches and rabble,

would, if restored to their rights, evince an elevation of sentiment, which, setting every species of corruption at defiance, must humble the pride of wealth by the superior lustre of virtuous poverty.

Opposition seem surprised that the people should view their debates with indifference. We will tell them the reason. It is, because nothing passes of a nature to animate and interest the people; nothing from which an individual can promise himself more happiness, or the community more splendour; it is, because enthusiasm no longer lights up the countenance of Grattan, and swells every heart with something great and good, and with the prospect of something greater and better; it is, because there appears no internal spring of action, no fixture of character, but good and bad qualities, as it were, external, and neither virtues nor vices their own; it is, because once in seven years the people are treated as majesty, and, in the interval, maltreated as mob.

We have not, in our plan of reform, paled in little parks of aristocracy. Our plan has not been described with a pair of compasses, nor have we defaced, with childish circles, the system of nature, and the chart of the constitution. There is no truth in any political system, in which the sun of liberty is not placed in the centre, with knowledge to enlighten, and benevolence to warm and invigorate; with the same ray to gild the palace and illuminate the cottage. "The earth moves," said Galileo, "and the sun stands still." He was imprisoned for the heretical assertion, for a libel against the law of nature, and for exciting sedition among the stars; but the earth moves notwithstanding; and, in spite of fine, imprisonment, pillory and transportation, the rights of man are the immoveable centre of the British constitution, that has hitherto regulated time, and determined revolutions.

Indeed the local circumstances seem to us rather in favour of introducing it into Ireland. We have lately had occasion, in considering the catholic claims, to examine into the foundations of government. The catholic has taught all Ireland, that to be taxed or legislated for, without being represented, is an oppression, which sinks the sufferer into a slave. He insisted on his right to the elective suffrage, because he was bound by the laws, and contributed to the expences of the state. The doctrine, once broached, can never be forgotten;

and the remaining slave, whom reform shall not have raised to the rank of citizen, will remember the argument of the catholic, and ask himself, "Am I not bound by the laws; and do I not, in my humble sphere, contribute to the expences of the state? Why am I not represented? Is it not my right; and shall I not insist upon my right?"

Sooner or later the measure must come. The eternal principle of justice will be repeated in louder and louder tones, until at length it must be heard and observed. Why not now? Why leave behind a source of new reforms, perhaps, of convulsions? If reform only communicate power to a greater number, and do not give liberty to all, it will only strengthen the ruling and weaken the oppressed body; so that when the slave shall have acquired sufficient courage to speak, the obstinacy of the citizen will compel him to act. We cannot forget the language made use of to intimidate the catholic from prosecuting his claims, and that those very claims, shortly after having been rejected with scorn, were admitted with respect. The same line of prudence and wisdom will, we are persuaded, be pursued in the case of reform, whenever convincing proof of the public sentiment shall be received on that subject, and the kingdom, by the restoration of universal suffrage, be delivered over to uninterrupted peace and happiness.

Contemplating this grateful prospect, we smile, with much internal satisfaction, on hearing those intemperate and abusive expressions, which the members of opposition make use of against this society. We smile at their inability to conceal the vexation and disappointment they have felt on finding themselves forsaken by the people; that people, whose majesty they insult, but whose forbearance they at the same time solicit, on finding themselves fallen, like the ostentatious balloon, from that height, to which they had risen by a sort of inflammable levity, and there sustained solely by the breath of popular favour.

We smile at the curious coalition of political parties against our society; to see them all club their wisdom and their wit, to manifest to the whole country that we are really formidable; but we are rather inclined to pity that forced fraternity, that monstrous conjunction, which, in spite of the horror of instinct, and the antipathy of nature, can join, in

one common effort, the highest genius with the lowest ribaldry. How great must be the panic that can unite such extremes! We can bear, as we have borne, the common-place invective against this society; but we feel some indignation, when they, who should look on themselves as the purchased property of the people; to whose fortune every man, even "the beggar on the bridge" has contributed; whom the "shouts of the mob" have raised to the height of their fame; when such men inveigh against armed beggary and shabby sedition, we cannot but remember a time when the usual adjunct to their own names was, "Shabby and seditious incendiaries." It is not manly, it is not decorous to deal out this contumelious language against the great mass of mankind. The use of contemptuous terms disposes to contemptuous treatment, and those, whom we vilify as mob, we soon learn to slight as men. It is the unequal partition of rights, and what results from this, the arrogance of power, and the abasement of poverty, which make mob, instigate to tumult, and goad to insurrection.

If the people were respected, they would revenge the constituted authorities; but to gain this respect, they must possess those rights, which are the prerogative of their nature, and the worth of manhood.

This defence of the objects of the United Irishmen, was their last effort. Equally dreaded and execrated by each division and subdivision of the aristocracy, government determined to extinguish the only body, that persevered in the pursuit of reform, and presumed to brave its power. This the sheriff, Mr. Giffard, accomplished; seizing the books of the society, and dispersing the members, on their usual day of meeting, in the Tailor's-hall, Back-lane, Dublin.

"This society," says Dr. Mac Neven, "from its first formation had been a mark for the abuse of government and its adherents. To the perseverance and exertions, however, of the

United Irishmen of Dublin, may be attributed much of the change which took place in the public mind in favour of the catholic claims. Just before the existence of their society, the followers of that religion would not be permitted, in an address of loyalty to the viceroy, to express a hope of relief: and not a member of parliament could be found even to present a petition to the legislature, praying that their case might be taken into consideration: yet the institution had not been eighteen months established, when, in spite of denunciations of war from the protestant ascendancy, and with only the ungracious and constrained assent of the Irish government, the popery laws, the disgrace and scourge of a century, were reduced to a few comparatively insignificant restraints. A reform in parliament seemed at one time too on the point of being conceded to that spirit, which the same society had been very instrumental in exciting, and was always among the foremost to evince. Whether that spirit be characterised as patriotism and firmness, or as faction or sedition, if all the friends of reform had concurred in displaying as much of it as was shown by the United Irishmen, and had marched *pari passu* with them, there can be no reasonable doubt, but that their efforts would have been crowned with complete success.”*

At the close of the session on the 25th of March, the speech from the throne expressed his Majesty's satisfaction in the zeal and unanimity

* Pieces of Irish History.

which governed the proceedings of parliament; and the cheerfulness with which liberal supplies were provided for the extraordinary emergencies of the state. It also stated, that his Majesty felt with the most cordial pleasure, the loyalty of the people of Ireland, and the affectionate determination they have always shown to stand or fall with Great Britain.

Shortly after the Rev. William Jackson was arrested on the novel charge of high-treason, and Mr. Rowan escaped out of Newgate. It appears that the French, soon after war commenced between the republic and his Majesty's dominions, sent an emissary to Ireland, to endeavour to induce the people to attempt the dissolution of the connexion with Great Britain, by offers of assistance. This agent communicated the proposal to the leading members of the United Irishmen, but those persons, though then eminently obnoxious to government, rejected the offer. Aware, however, of the importance of creating a diversion in their favour, in the heart of the dominions of their most formidable enemy, France renewed the attempt the following year, and the application was favourably received. For this purpose they employed the Rev. William Jackson, a dissenting clergyman, whose mission included England and Ireland. In London, by means of a merchant, Mr. Stone, he was enabled to ascertain, that all parties would unite to repel invasion; consequently, that the invasion of England was hopeless. He then determined to proceed to Ireland; but first made

Mr. Cockayne, an attorney, who had been his acquaintance many years, privy to his mission. Mr. Cockayne directly communicated the intelligence to the English ministry, and was directed to accompany Mr. Jackson, that he might report his proceedings. On their arrival in Dublin, in the April of 1794, a gentleman, who had known Cockayne in London, accidentally met and invited them to dinner. Mr. Jackson there formed an acquaintance with Mr. Lewines, by whom he was introduced to Mr. Rowan, then in Newgate, and by him to Mr. Tone and Dr. Reynolds. To them he communicated the motives of his journey, and showed the paper he had procured in England. These gentlemen now readily entered into his views, and Mr. Tone drew up, for the purpose of being sent to France, the following statement of what he conceived to be the actual state of the people of Ireland.

“ The situation of Ireland and England is fundamentally different in this—the government of England is national, that of Ireland provincial. The interest of the first is the same with that of the people—of the last directly opposite. The people of Ireland are divided into three sects; the Established Church, the Dissenters, and the Catholics; the first, infinitely the smallest portion, have engrossed, besides the whole church patronage, all the profits and honours of the country exclusively, and a very great share of the landed property. They are of course aristocrats, adverse to any change, and decided enemies of the French revolution. The Dissenters, which are much more numerous, are the most enlightened body of the nation; they are steady republicans, devoted to liberty, and through all the stages of the French revolution have been enthusiastically attached to it. The

Catholics; the great body of the people, are in the lowest degree of ignorance, and are ready for any change, because no change can make them worse. The whole peasantry in Ireland, the most oppressed and wretched in Europe, may be said to be Catholic. They have within these two years received a certain degree of information, and manifested a proportionate degree of discontent by various insurrections, &c. They are a bold, hardy race, and make excellent soldiers. There is no where a higher spirit of aristocracy than in all the privileged orders, the clergy and gentry of Ireland; to countervail which, there appears a spirit now rising in the people which never existed before, but which is spreading most rapidly, as appears by the Defenders as they are called, and other insurgents. If the people of Ireland be 4,000,000, as it seems probable they are, the Established Church may be reckoned at 450,000, the Dissenters at 900,000, the Catholics at 3,150,000. The prejudices in England are adverse to the French nation, under whatever form of government. It seems idle to suppose the present rancour against the French is owing merely to their being republicans; it has been cherished by the manners of four centuries, and aggravated by continual wars. It is morally certain, that any invasion of England would unite all ranks in opposition to the invaders. In Ireland, a conquered, oppressed and insulted country, the name of England and her power is universally odious, save with those who have an interest in maintaining it: a body, however, only formidable from situation and property, but which the first convulsion would level in the dust; on the contrary, the great bulk of the people of Ireland would be ready to throw off the yoke in this country, if they saw any force sufficiently strong to resort to for defence until arrangements could be made; the Dissenters are enemies to the English power from reason and from reflection, the Catholics from a hatred of the English name; in a word, the prejudices of one country are directly adverse, of the other directly favourable to an invasion. The government of Ireland is only to be looked upon as a government of force, the moment a superior force appears, it would tumble at once, as being founded

neither in the interests nor in the affections of the people. It may be said, the people of Ireland shew no political exertion. In the first place, public spirit is completely depressed by the recent persecutions of several, the Convention-act, the Gunpowder, &c. &c. Declarations of Government, Parliamentary Unanimity, or Declarations of Grand Juries, all proceeding from aristocrats, whose interest is adverse to that of the people, and who think such conduct necessary for their security, are no obstacles; the weight of such men falls in the general welfare, and their own tenantry and dependants would desert and turn against them; the people have no way of expressing their discontent *civilliter*, which is at the same time greatly aggravated by those measures; and they are, on the other hand, in that *semi-barbarous* state, which is of all others the best adapted for making war. The spirit of Ireland cannot therefore be calculated from newspaper publications, county meetings, &c. at which the gentry only meet and speak for themselves. They are so situated that they have but one way left to make their sentiments known, and that is by war. The church-establishment and tythes are very severe grievances, and have been the cause of numberless local insurrections; in a word, from reason, reflection, interest, prejudice, the spirit of change, the misery of the great bulk of the nation, and above all, the hatred of the English name, resulting from the tyranny of near seven centuries, there seems little doubt but an invasion in sufficient force would be supported by the people. There is scarce any army in the country, and the militia, the bulk of whom are catholics, would to a moral certainty refuse to act, if they saw such a force as they could look to for support."

" Mr. Jackson was so pleased with this paper and its author, that he pressed him very strongly to go to France, and enforce in person its contents; promising him the utmost success, both as a public and private man. At first Mr. Tone agreed to this proposal; but afterwards declined it, on account of his wife and children. Mr.

Rowan then suggested, that Dr. Reynolds should go on the same mission, which he was not unwilling to do, but was discountenanced by Jackson, who wished it to be undertaken by no other person but Tone, of whose consent he had not entirely despaired. While this was going on, government was minutely informed of every particular by the intervention of Cockayne; and having intercepted some of Jackson's letters, enough to form a body of evidence against him, he was arrested the latter end of April. Dr. Reynolds shortly after got privately to America. Mr. Rowan escaped from Newgate on the night of the first of May, and was conveyed on board a small vessel in Dublin harbour, that had been secured for him by a friend. A proclamation was directly issued by government, offering £1000 reward for his apprehension, and another by the corporation of Dublin, from whose gaol he had escaped, offering £500 for the same purpose. The sailors of the ship in which he was concealed, knowing whom they had on board, showed him the two proclamations, to which he answered, " lads, my life is in your hands;" and made them fully acquainted with the cause of his danger and flight. They instantly assured him, they never would betray, but would protect him to the last extremity. Accordingly, on the first change of wind, they put to sea, and landed him safely in France. Tone, on the other hand, made no attempt at concealment or escape. It was not at first ascertained that Cockayne was an informer, and even after he had reason to be

otherwise convinced, he persuaded himself that no more could be proved against him, than misprision of treason, in concealing a solicitation to go to France, which he had rejected. In this opinion he was probably mistaken, but the point was never tried, owing to the interposition of private friendship.*”

At this period is to be dated the commencement of the society of United Irishmen, embodied for the establishment of an independent republican government in Ireland. The first traces of this institution are to be found in Belfast, among mechanics, petty shop-keepers, and farmers. One of the three societies of United Irishmen, that had been formed in this town, escaped observation by the obscurity of its members, and continued its sittings; a union was formed between it and another club of men, principally in the same sphere of life, some of whom had been United Irishmen. This association adopted the name of United Irishmen, and their test, but so altered, as to embrace the objects they had in view. 'This test did not simply bind to the use of abilities and influence in the attainment of an impartial and adequate representation of the Irish nation in parliament; but "to persevere in endeavouring to obtain a full and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland;" thus leaving ample room for the efforts of republicanism. Secrecy and mutual confidence now became essentially necessary; and the laws, which

* Pieces of Irish History.

stood in the way of the pursuits and objects of these societies, must also be disarmed of their terrors. For this purpose it was made part of the admission oath, that neither hopes nor fears, rewards nor punishments, should ever induce the person taking it, directly or indirectly to give evidence against any member of those societies, for any act or expression pursuant to the spirit of the obligation.

Such was the plan and test, adopted and taken by the two Belfast clubs, in which town and vicinity several similar ones were speedily formed, during the summer and autumn of this year. Their constitution was as follows.

I. This Society is constituted for the purpose of forwarding a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights, and an union of power among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and thereby to obtain a complete reform in the legislature, founded on the principles of civil, political and religious liberty.

II. Every candidate for admission into this society shall be proposed by one member, and seconded by another, both of whom shall vouch for his character and principles. The candidate to be ballotted for on the society's subsequent meeting; and if one of the beans shall be black, he shall stand rejected.

III. Each society shall fix upon a weekly subscription suited to the circumstances and convenience of its numbers, which they shall regularly return to their baronial by the proper officer.

IV. The officers of this society shall be a secretary and treasurer, who shall be appointed by ballot every three months; on every first meeting in November, February, May and August.

V. A society shall consist of no more, than *twelve* members, and those as nearly as possible of the same street or neighbourhood, whereby they may be all thoroughly known

to each other, and their conduct be subject to the censorial check of all.

VI. Every person elected a member of this society shall, previous to his admission, take the following test; but, in order to diminish risk, it shall be taken in a separate apartment, in the presence of the persons who proposed and seconded him only, after which the new member shall be brought into the body of the society, and there vouched for by the same.

Test.—"In the awful presence of God, I, A. B. do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of *every* religious persuasion, and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full and adequate representation of *all* the people of Ireland. I do further declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards or punishments shall ever induce me, directly or indirectly, to inform on or give evidence against any member or members of this or similar societies, for any act or expression of theirs, done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of this society, in pursuance of the spirit of this obligation."

VII. No person, though he shall have taken the test, will be considered as an United Irishman until he has contributed to the funds of the institution, or longer than he shall continue to pay such contribution.

VIII. No communication relating to the business of the institution shall be made to any United Irishman on any pretence whatever, except in his own society or committee, or by some member of his own society or committee.

IX. When the society shall amount to the number of twelve members it shall be equally divided by lot, (societies in country places to divide, as may best suit their local situation,) that is, the names of all the members shall be put into a hat or box, the secretary or treasurer shall draw out six individually, which six shall be considered the senior society, and the remaining six the junior, who shall apply to the baronial committee, through the delegates of the senior society, for a number. This mode shall be pursued until the whole neighbourhood is organized.

Order of business at meetings.—I. New members read declaration and test, during which subscriptions to be col-

lected.—II. Reports of committees received.—IV. Candidates ballotted for.—V. Candidates proposed.

Constitution of committees.—Baronial committees.—I. When any barony or other district shall contain from four to ten societies, the secretaries of these shall constitute a lower baronial committee; they should not exceed ten, and be numbered in the order of their formation.

II. An upper baronial to consist of ten secretaries from ten lower baronials.

III. Baronial committees shall receive delegates from societies of a contiguous barony, provided said barony did not contain four societies.

County committees.—I. When any county shall contain four or more upper baronial committees, their secretaries shall assemble and choose deputies to form a county committee.

II. County committees shall receive delegates from baronial committees of adjacent counties, if said counties do not contain four baronial committees.

Provincial committees.—I. When two or more counties shall have county committees, two persons shall be elected by ballot from each, to form a provincial committee for three months.

II. Delegates from county committees in other provinces will be received, if such provinces do not contain two county committees.

National committee.—That when two provincial committees are formed, they shall elect five persons each, by ballot, to form a national committee.

Society's first meetings in November, February, May and August, to be on or before the 5th; baronial committees on or before the 8th; county committees on or before the 25th of the above months.

Baronial, county and provincial committees shall meet at least once in every month, and report to their constituents.

Names of committee men should not be known by any person but by those who elect them.

Test for secretaries of societies or committees.—"In the awful presence of God, I, A. B. do voluntarily declare, that as long as I shall hold the office of secretary to this I will, to the utmost of my abilities, faithfully discharge the

duties thereof.—That all papers or documents received by me as secretary, I will in safety keep; I will not give any of them, or any copy or copies of them to any person or persons, members or others, but by a vote of this and that I will, at the expiration of my secretaryship, deliver up to this all such papers as may be then in my possession.”

Recapitulation.—Societies to consist of not less than four, nor more than twelve, complete twelve; under baronials of not less than four secretaries of societies, nor more than ten, complete one hundred and twenty; upper baronials of not less than four baronial secretaries, nor more than ten, complete one thousand two hundred.

But an apparently fortunate change of men and measures, in the administration, nearly extinguished these revolutionary societies in their birth. The Duke of Portland and his friends entered into a coalition with Mr. Pitt's administration, under the idea that the general administration and management of Ireland should be vested in his grace. The superintendence of this country having been vested in the duke, he seems to have been seriously intent on remedying some of the vices in its government. The system of the government, he said, was execrable; so execrable as to threaten not only Ireland with the greatest misfortune, but ultimately the empire. So strong was this opinion on his mind, that he seemed determined on going himself to reform those manifold abuses; if he could not find some one in whom he might have the most unbounded confidence, to undertake the arduous task. Such a person he found in lord Fitzwilliam, his second self, his nearest and dearest friend. This nobleman was far from desirous of undertaking the

herculean office; but he was urgently pressed and persuaded by the duke of Portland. They both had connexions and political friends in Ireland, members of the opposition, whom they wished to consult on the future arrangements, and whose support lord Fitzwilliam conceived of indispensable importance. Mr. Grattan, Mr. William Ponsonby, Mr. Denis Bowes Daly, and other members of that party, were therefore invited to London. They had frequent consultations with the duke of Portland and lord Fitzwilliam, at which Mr. Edmund Burke also occasionally assisted.

These consultations lasted for some months; and when the opposition leaders had determined upon their project, it was communicated to the British cabinet, as containing the terms upon which they were willing to take a share in the Irish government. Mr. Pitt wished, and indeed tried to obtain, that some of those measures should be at least delayed in the execution for a season; but Mr. Grattan and his friends insisted that they should be brought forward the very first session, in order to give eclat to the commencement of their administration. In the propriety of this demand the duke of Portland uniformly concurred, and even Mr. Pitt himself, who had previously kept in the back ground, and avoided personal communication with lord Fitzwilliam's friends, was present at some of the latter interviews, and certainly did not prevent its being believed, that he acquiesced in those demands, with which it was impossible to doubt

his being acquainted. The members of opposition had no great experience of cabinets; they conceived, that they were entering into honourable engagements, in which every thing that was allowed to be understood, was equally binding with whatever was absolutely expressed. They rested satisfied that their stipulations were known and acceded to; they neglected to get them formally signed and ratified, or reduced to the shape of instructions from the British cabinet to the viceroy; they put them unsuspectingly in their pockets, and set off to become ministers in Ireland. Dr. Hussey too, an Irishman and a catholic ecclesiastic, who, it is said, had more than once been entrusted with important missions by English administrations, was sent over by the cabinet, to superintend and frame a plan for the education of the Irish clergy, in coincidence, it was supposed, with the other benefits intended for the members of that religion.

Mr. Grattan and his colleagues were scarcely arrived, when, finding that public expectation, particularly on the catholic question, had been awakened by the negotiations in England, and by lord Fitzwilliam's appointment, they determined to begin without delay the system of conciliation, for which, as they conceived, they had received sufficient authority. It was therefore communicated so early as the 15th of December, to some of the most active members of the late catholic committee, that lord Fitzwilliam had full powers to consent to the removal of all remaining disabilities; but that, as opposition to

that measure was naturally to be expected from the protestant ascendancy, it behoved the catholics to be active in their own cause, and to be prepared with petitions from all quarters. This intimation overcame a resolution formed by very many of that persuasion, that they would never again consent to meet as a distinct body. On the 23d, the former sub-committee, therefore, advised the catholics to petition in their different counties and districts, for the entire restoration of their rights.

On the 4th of January, 1795, lord Fitzwilliam took possession of the government of Ireland. The principal streets of the metropolis were illuminated on his arrival, and the public exultation, as he was understood to possess the inclination, and a plenitude of power to satisfy the wishes of the Irish nation, was unbounded. Addresses of affection and respect were framed in every corner of the kingdom; all descriptions of persons, all political and religious opinions, blended in one unanimous expression of reliance upon his excellency's virtues and the principles of his administration. Of these principles, then publicly known, the Irish Protestant Dissenters conveyed their approbation in the following address.

To his Excellency William, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Lieutenant General, and General Governor of Ireland.

“ May it please your Excellency,

“ We beg leave, in the name, and by the appointment of his Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Protestant Dissenters of Ireland, to present our sincere congratulations to your Excellency on your safe arrival in this kingdom.—

While we approach your Excellency with peculiar satisfaction, as the approved friend of civil and religious liberty, and the inheritor of the virtues of your illustrious kinsman, the late Marquis of Rockingham, we cannot but deem your Excellency's appointment to the high station you now hold, a distinguished mark of his Majesty's paternal regard for the interests of this country.

“ Deriving from our ancestors a high and sacred veneration for the principles of the glorious revolution, which placed the august house of Hanover on the throne of these kingdoms, we humbly trust that our conduct will on every occasion secure your Excellency's favourable representation of our affectionate and steady attachment to the person, family and government of our most gracious Sovereign.

Permit us to express our conviction, that your Excellency's administration will be directed by that enlightened wisdom, which cannot fail to promote the true dignity of his Majesty's crown, and your Excellency's highest honour, as inseparable from the real welfare, prosperity and happiness of Ireland.”

The address of the catholics of the city of Dublin was presented with unusual pomp. A numerous and respectable assemblage of this description of his majesty's subjects, assembled at the Rotunda, and proceeded thence, in a train of carriages, led by the chairman of the late general committee, Edward Byrne, to the castle. The deputation was received in the most gracious manner, and the procession returned in the same order to the Rotunda.

To his Excellency William, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Lieutenant General, and General Governor of Ireland.

“ May it please your Excellency,

“ We, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Catholics of the City of Dublin, beg leave to approach your Excellency with our most sincere and heart-felt congratula-

tion on your appointment to the high and important office of lord lieutenant of this kingdom.—We entreat your Excellency to believe, that it is with more than ordinary gratitude we receive this additional proof of the paternal goodness of our most gracious Sovereign, in deputing a Nobleman who, from his character, situation and talents, his intimate connexion with, and extensive property in this country, we entertain the most founded hopes, will strenuously and successfully promote the interests of Ireland—and our gratification is still heightened by the strong impression we feel, that those men will stand foremost in your Excellency's confidence, who have on all great occasions appeared the most powerful supporters of the interest of their country—and to whose exertions the Catholics of Ireland are so peculially indebted.

“Relieved, as we have been recently, from the pressure of many severe and degrading incapacities—we hope to manifest to your Excellency, that our gratitude is commensurate with the benefits we have received, of the value and extent of which we are deeply sensible—and we can, with confidence, assert, that when it shall seem good to the legislature to remove those disabilities which yet remain, our demeanour will be that of men worthy of receiving complete relief from a gracious and beneficent Monarch, and a liberal and enlightened legislature.

“We entreat your Excellency to receive our sincere professions of loyalty to our Sovereign, to whose paternal recommendation we feel so much indebted—and of inviolable attachment to the principles of our most excellent constitution, into whose bosom it is our utmost ambition to be admitted; and we trust that to your Excellency's administration is reserved the glory of completing the benevolent wish of the Father of his People, for the union of all his subjects in sentiment, interest and affection, by an abolition of all partial restrictions, founded only on religious distinction;—thereby insuring security and protection to the Catholics, and strength, honour and prosperity to Ireland.”

The eventful session of 1795 commenced on the 22d of January. The speech from the throne

distinctly, yet cautiously, alluded to the measures of his excellency's administration.

“ My Lords and Gentlemen,

“ I earnestly recommend to you a continuance of the laudable pains you have constantly taken to cultivate all your domestic advantages in commerce, in manufactures, and in such public works as have appeared directed to promote those important objects. These are the true foundations of all public revenue and public strength. Your endeavours have had their fruit. The great staple manufacture of this kingdom has increased beyond the most sanguine expectations: an advantage principally owing to the constant superintendence and wise provisions of the parliament of Ireland; and, next to those, to the assured, liberal, and most merited encouragement which it receives in the rich and extensive market of Great Britain; a circumstance tending to cement the union, and to perfect the harmony which happily subsists, and, I trust, will subsist for ever, between the two kingdoms.

“ Attached as you are to the general cause of religion, learning and civilization, I have to recommend to your consideration the state of education in this kingdom, which, in some parts will admit of improvement, in others may require some new arrangement. Considerable advantages have been already derived, under the wise regulations of parliament, from the Protestant Charter Schools, and these will, as usual, claim your attention: but as these advantages have been but partial, and as circumstances have made other considerations connected with this important subject highly necessary, it is hoped, that your wisdom will order every thing relating to it in the manner most beneficial, and the best adapted to the occasions of the several descriptions of men which compose his Majesty's faithful subjects of Ireland.

“ We are engaged in an arduous contest. The time calls not only for great fortitude, and an unusual share of public spirit, but for much constancy and perseverance. You are engaged with a power, which, under the ancient forms of its internal arrangement, was always highly formidable to the neighbouring nations. Lately this power has assumed a new shape; but, with the same ambition, with much more exten-

sive and systematic designs, far more effective, and, without comparison, more dreadful in the certain consequences of its eventual success, it threatens nothing less than the entire subversion of the liberty and independence of every state in Europe. An enemy to them all, it is actuated with a peculiar animosity against these kingdoms, not only as the natural protection of the balance of power in Europe, but also, because by the possession of a legal, humane and rational freedom, we seem to reproach that false and spurious liberty, which, in reality, is an ignominious servitude, tending to extinguish all good arts, to generate nothing but impiety, crime, disorder and ferocious manners, and to end in wretchedness and general desolation.

“To guard his people from the enterprises of this dangerous and malignant power, and for the protection of all civilized society against the inroad of anarchy, his Majesty has availed himself of every rational aid, foreign and domestic; he has called upon the skill, courage and experience of all his subjects, wheresoever dispersed, and you must be duly sensible, in such a crisis as the present, which rarely occurs in the course of human affairs, of the advantage of his Majesty’s thus endeavouring to profit of the united strength and zeal of every description of his subjects.

“I have to assure you of his Majesty’s most chearful concurrence in every measure which your wisdom and comprehensive patriotism shall point out for this salutary purpose.

“On my part you shall find me, from principle and from inclination, thoroughly disposed to concur with his Majesty’s paternal wishes, and with the wise measures of his parliament. On a cordial affection to the whole of Ireland, and on a conduct suitable to that sentiment, I wish to found my own personal estimation, and my reputation in the execution of the great trust, committed by the most beneficent of sovereigns to my care.”

The address was moved by Mr. Grattan, who after recommending with the greatest energy, the most ample support of Great Britain, in a vigorous prosecution of the war, against the principles and power of France, returns to the

state of Ireland. "To be attached to Great Britain is of no avail, unless you are also attached to one another; external energy must arise from internal union, and without that your attachment to England, and your allegiance to the king, though extremely honourable, would be entirely useless.

"His majesty, therefore, in the second part of his speech, recommends national harmony; he bids perpetual peace to all your animosities; he touches with the sceptre those troubled waters, which have long shattered the weary bark of your country, under her various and false pilots, for ages of insane persecution and impious theology; it is a continuation of that pious and profound recommendation, which enlightened the speech of 1793, when the olive descended from the throne; on the experiment of that advice, he congratulated the liberality of parliament; he spreads his parental wing over all his children, discerning with parental affection and a father's eye, in the variety of their features, the fidelity of their resemblance; he therefore overrules the jingling jargon which disgraces your understanding, and that poverty of pride which is vain of mutual degradation, and creates a real poverty of condition; and he calls forth all the public and private energies of all his people, neither resting his throne on the monopoly of allegiance, no more than he rested your fortunes on the monopoly of commerce. That mildness with which his majesty governs his people, his excellency recommends as a mode to them which

they should observe to one another; certain, that attachment to his majesty never approaches the throne with so much effect or dignity as when accompanied by an attachment to themselves, and a union among one another, founded on a common interest, a free and proud condition; under a reign, whose glory it has been to give to his subjects in this country, privileges and protection. In the same mildness, his excellency enters into the spirit of the legislature, in its act of liberality; and teaches you to expect, that, in the administration of the government, he will second the bountiful intention of the laws, the spirit in which they were made, and the liberality in which they were recommended; these recommendations are accompanied by a certain stile of love, and tone of graciousness, coming as it were from a breast too just to injure, and manners too high to insult.

“The union of all the property of the country in support of the laws, and all the talents in support of the property, with measures to redress and to unite, accompanied with a graciousness of manner to the subject, that he may feel not only a privilege under the government, but a pride in the condition of being a subject; another pledge of his allegiance, is an experiment worthy of a wise government, whose primary object is your prosperity, and whose secondary object is your love; a government, looking in its arrangement of measures for the constitution, a solid strength, and for itself an honest power, to administer the country according to its confidence in pursuit of

its advantages, with a spirit too high for resentment, and alike superior to plunder or proscription."

This speech of Mr. Grattan's clearly unfolds the principles of his excellency's administration, of which the emancipation of the catholics formed the leading feature. The address to his majesty, though opposed by lord Edward Fitzgerald and Mr. Duquerry, who condemned the war, was carried without a division; as was also the address to the lord lieutenant, proposed by Mr. Connolly.

Two days after the opening of parliament, Mr. Grattan presented the petition of the Catholics of the City of Dublin. It stated, that, in pursuance of his Majesty's most gracious and paternal recommendation of the situation of his catholic subjects of this kingdom to the wisdom and liberality of his parliament, which was, in the course of the session of 1793, pleased to remove many of the disabilities, pains and penalties, under which the Catholics of Ireland had so long laboured, by a repeal of divers severe and oppressive laws, peculiarly affecting that body; that while the petitioners feel the deepest and most lively sense of the wisdom and goodness of parliament, manifested in the repeal of the said penal and restrictive statutes, they cannot, in justice to themselves, refrain from most humbly submitting, that the Catholics of Ireland have been, and still are, in a number and variety of instances, prevented from enjoying the full benefits of the constitution of their country, by the existence of certain disabilities and restraints,

which the petitioners do now, with all humility and deference, presume to hope, on every principle, as well of expediency as of justice, it will no longer be thought necessary to retain; that the petitioners do most humbly presume to suggest to the wisdom of the house, that the most effectual mode to unite in sentiment all his Majesty's subjects of Ireland in support of our most excellent constitution, agreeably to his gracious and paternal wish, will be to extend to them its blessings, by the abolition of those incapacities and disqualifications, of which the petitioners presume most humbly to complain; and therefore praying the house, taking the situation of the petitioners into consideration, their loyalty to their Sovereign, their respect to the legislature, and dutiful and obedient submission to the laws, may be pleased to restore them to a full enjoyment of the blessings of our most excellent constitution, by a repeal of all the penal and restrictive laws now affecting the Catholics of Ireland.

Petitions from every distinct body of catholics throughout the kingdom, were soon after presented, praying the adoption of this measure, to which no serious opposition was expected. Parliament seemed at length ready to render justice with an unsparing hand; the protestants no where raised a murmur of dissatisfaction, and a petition in favour of this expected liberality was once more presented by the indefatigable town of Belfast.

The important business of supply soon engaged the attention of parliament. On the motion of Mr. Grattan, £200,000 were voted for the pur-

pose of raising men in this kingdom, for the purpose of manning the navy: the military establishment was also raised to 41,000 men, regulars and militia. The grants for these purposes received the unanimous concurrence of parliament, and were cheerfully acquiesced in by the nation, confident of the attainment of the measures to which administration stood pledged.

These measures, indeed, Sir Lawrence Parsons, on the opening of the budget, the 9th of February, wished to be particularly specified. After expressing the highest confidence in the noble lord at the head of the government of the country, and in the administration who aided his councils, there was a degree of confidence, he said, which he could not, as a representative of the people, place in any administration. As such it was certainly his duty to know on what ground he was to vote away very large sums of the people's money; what measures were to be adopted for the improvement of the constitution, when he was told what supplies would be necessary. It was with the utmost respect that he therefore entreated of gentlemen in the confidence of government, according to the ancient usage of parliament, that redress of grievance and the supply should go hand in hand, to state what measures they intended to bring forward for the melioration of the constitution. Are they determined, he asked, to persevere in that system, and those principles, which they year after year had inculcated on the country? will they give those particular measures which they have so often recommended?

We have been asked by the Hon. Baronet, replied Mr. Grattan, whether the principles which we professed when not in the confidence of government will be the ruling principles of our councils now? To that question I answer explicitly for myself, and for those with whom I act, they certainly are. But the first principle is the defence of the country, and to that all others must be postponed. This answer not appearing sufficiently specific, Sir Lawrence thought it his duty to call for a public declaration, whether the measures they had supported when out of office they would promote now that they are in? He would be glad to know, for instance, whether the convention-bill would be repealed? whether the reform-bill would be brought forward? He wished to know whether any reduction of the expences of the country was to take place? whether all places, granted within a certain period, and which it had been often said were created but for purposes of corruption, were now to cease? He would be very happy to know too, whether the trade of the two countries was to be put exactly upon the same footing, and whether the revenue-officer's bill was now to be proposed. He wished to hear whether these specific measures were now to be given, that, as a representative of the people, he might be able to announce some remuneration for the great sums which were to be levied on them. Mr. Grattan, having consulted his colleagues, observed, that it would be a very unfounded presumption for gentlemen to suppose that nothing was to be given to the country; but

he submitted whether it would be right, at this moment, to give a detail of every bill which was meant to be proposed? It would be, in his mind, not only premature and unnecessary, but, in a certain degree, presumptuous, to say that such and such measures should be given; as it would imply that ministers possess an influence over that house which no minister should dare avow. The question was, however, fair, so far as it was general; and in answer to it he again declared, and he was authorised by the gentlemen around him to declare, that the principles which the gentlemen in administration had entertained when they were not in office, they adhered to in their present situation, and that they would do every thing in their power to carry them into effect. In a subsequent part of the debate, Mr. W. B. Ponsonby, (who had introduced the reform bill the year before,) said, he held it right to notice some expressions that had been thrown out in the course of the night, in order to sound whether the gentlemen who possessed the confidence of administration, were determined to persevere in the same line of conduct which they observed while out of office, and to endeavour for a redress of grievances. For his own part, he believed and trusted they would go as far as possible to reform abuses, to obviate popular complaints; and he should only say, that if not convinced that they were of the same sentiments with himself, they should never have his support.

On the same day, the 9th of February, the chancellor of the exchequer made his annual

financial statement. The income of the country he stated to have considerably increased; yet he was sorry it was still found necessary to recur to the liberality of the country for a very large sum. The circumstances of the times, and of Europe, would, he hoped, justify the demand. Having stated the increased expences, he proceeded to show, at one view, the whole of the expenditure, and the revenue of the year, by which it appeared, that £1,600,000 should be raised by loan, exclusive of a lottery.

Mr. Duquerry animadverted on this statement. The chancellor of the exchequer now tells the house, he said, that it is a striking mark of thriving, that the country is obliged to get annually £1,500,000 in debt; for under this glowing sun of prosperity, which now enlightens and enlivens this happy country, this sum, the chancellor of the exchequer tells the house, it is necessary to borrow! But the manner in which this sum is to be borrowed most happily illustrates the prosperity of Ireland. England is to be called on for £1,100,000, while rich and prosperous Ireland is able only to lend herself £400,000. Going on at this rate we must become amazingly prosperous, indeed; like a salamander, we must live in the midst of fire. To come to a true knowledge of the real state of Ireland, he would ask a simple question: have the revenues of Ireland for March 94, been equal to those of March 93? He would answer for it, they were not. Every man who knew business knew that the Custom-house quay was a parade; that the

Custom-house itself was but for show; a monument of Irish folly and corruption. So far were the revenues of 94 being equal to those of 93, that the difference was not less than £78,000. The military establishment of the country, six years ago, was less by some hundred thousands of pounds than the establishment of this year, which was £800,000. How was the debt of the country in the year 1791? It was £2,231,000. In 93, it amounted to £2,344,000! There is another proof of the growing prosperity of the country! Taking all those proofs of prosperity, they amount to this, that as your establishments increase, your incomes diminish, and your debt accumulates; you become a great and a happy nation, and are raising yourselves to a proud eminence! It was, he said, to this practice of getting in debt, that all the wars in which Britain has engaged since the reign of Anne, may be attributed; and, though it has been so long the fashion, yet Ireland is the only country that has been obliged to travel from among its own people to borrow: but Ireland now is obliged to send her chancellor of the exchequer, with his knapsack upon his back, like a mower, to bring home wherewith to support herself. We are, indeed, said Mr. Duquery, in a situation from which we cannot extricate ourselves; but if we must support the contest in which we are engaged, let us at least see our situation in its true light; and let us not believe that we are advancing towards prosperity, while we are hurrying headlong to ruin. All our funds are fallen; it cannot be

helped; I agree in the necessity of our situation; but if it must be borne, let us not tell the people that we are growing like a flower in a hot house; tell them rather, that when they give the sum you call for, they are giving their last shilling; that they are sinking, and that years will not bring them up."

Three days after Mr. Grattan proceeded to carry into effect the expected measures. Leave was given to bring in a bill for repealing the police laws, which were extremely obnoxious to the inhabitants of Dublin. He also obtained leave to bring in the catholic bill, which was resisted only by Dr. Duigenan, Mr. Ogle, and colonel Blaquiere. On the same night, in pursuance of the same plan, it was announced by the chancellor of the exchequer, that a new arrangement would be made of the duties on beer and spirits; in order to restrain the abuse of spirituous liquors, and substitute a wholesome and nourishing beverage for a liquid poison. He also stated, that a new arrangement of the hearth-tax would form a part of the financial system, for the purpose of exempting, absolutely and unconditionally, all houses having but one hearth. On a day or two after, Mr. Boyd brought in a bill for the better regulation of juries.

On the 23d of February, the new administration brought forward their proposed regulations of the treasury board. Lord Milton obtained leave to introduce a bill on that subject, founded on some resolutions proposed by Mr. Forbes, the scope of which was, to give to the Irish board

an equally efficient controul with that possessed by the board of treasury in England; to compel the payment of balances by public officers; to exclude the commissioners of the treasury from sitting in parliament; to establish, in correspondent officers, the mutual checks and controul with which the auditor, clerk of the rolls, and teller of the exchequer in England are vested; and that all money arising from the receipt of the revenues should be paid into the bank of Ireland. On the following day Mr. Grattan suggested the propriety of revising the revenue laws, and bringing the whole code within the compass of one consistent act.

The supplies to an unprecedented amount being voted, and the Irish parliament exhibited in the leading-strings of the British minister, the political parties in the legislature also completely committed, and the breach widened between the adverse partizans of ascendancy and emancipation, the last act of this political plot was performed; Earl Fitzwilliam was recalled, and the great measure of catholic emancipation rejected. This conduct of the heaven-born minister, and its consequences, was ably exposed in the commons, when Sir Laurence Parsons vainly attempted to limit the duration of the money bills on the 2d of March. He said, he rose unconnected with any body of men, to submit his ideas on the situation of the country, and of the measures that ought in that situation to be adopted. He might not please all parties, nor any party; but he would rest satisfied with having discharged his duty,

convinced as he was, in his own conscience, that he was doing right.

The state of the kingdom was most alarming. The people, under the auspices of their old friends, had been taught to expect measures, which, he feared, would very shortly be resisted. How far his apprehensions were founded, the gentlemen opposite to him (the treasury-bench) were better able to explain; but if the hopes of the nation were blasted, he could not, without sensations of the greatest horror, look to the consequences. He had always the highest respect for the revered nobleman at the head of the government, and the firmest reliance on the gentlemen he had called to his councils. He never doubted of their sincerity; but he had universally entertained doubts of the sincerity of the British cabinet, and concluded that administration would not have it in their power to do all the good that they intended. The first objection, he was aware, that would be made to his motion was, that it would go to limit the supplies; and, of course, shake not only all the establishments of the state, but our system of defence. He anticipated the argument, in order to disprove the consequences. In 1779 the same measure had been taken by the house of commons. No injury arose from it; on the contrary, public credit experienced new life. In 1783 a similar occasion called for a similar remedy; and then again so far from the discontent and jargon that were employed to deter the constitutional check of the house upon the evil advisers of the crown having foundation, the

credit of Ireland arrived at a pitch which it had never known before. With these two experiments in favour of a short money bill, he hoped that no one would assert, that resorting to that alternative in the present eventful moment, would have an ill effect upon public credit. Upon what does public credit depend? Upon the confidence of the people in the parliament. And upon what does that confidence depend? Upon the character of parliament—upon their disdaining to be the servile tools of every British minister, who may one day put forward one set of men and one set of measures, and the next other men and other measures, and oblige you to go through the business of supporting all. This assembly, if it assents to such dictation, will be the most degraded and debased that has ever yet claimed to be the representatives of the people. Public credit was not, in any degree, affected by the length of the grant, unless the wicked advisers of the crown meant to deal unfairly by both people and parliament. For no one would suppose, that at the expiration of the time, the quantum for the year having been voted, that the house would not renew the duties for such time as they should judge expedient. What then could they effect by a short money bill, unless that they might secure the sitting of parliament, without injuring the security of the lender of money. Another objection might be, that the house was pledged to the supply; it was true, that they were pledged in a certain degree, but to no power on earth were they pledged to make

a grant for twelve months. He had, indeed, himself stated, when the grant was proposed, that the constitutional practice ought to be kept in view, and that the grant of supplies and the redress of grievances ought to go hand in hand. His intention was, to have proposed certain measures, which nothing but his implicit confidence in the integrity of administration prevented.

If it should be said, that the supply having been once granted, he was too late; he would answer, then all the forms of parliament were nonsense, and never intended as checks upon rashness and precipitation. The contract had been broken on one side, and he could not see, therefore, in justice, why it might not be departed from in the other. It was repugnant to common sense to suppose the contrary; or, that in the private dealings of life, a man was bound to fulfil his part of an engagement when the person with whom he had dealings shrunk from what might be understood to be the terms. But the great object of the motion which he meant to make was, to calm the public mind; to give the people an assurance, that the measures which were proposed would not be abandoned; that parliament would keep the means in their hands till they were accomplished; and, that they would not be prorogued until they were fairly and fully discussed. He did not pretend to say specifically what these measures were. The first he believed to be the catholic bill; and if a resistance to any one measure more than another was likely to promote dreadful consequences, it was this. He

said nothing as to the original propriety of the measure, but this much he would say, that if the Irish administration had countenanced the catholics in this expectation, without the concurrence of the British cabinet, they had much to answer for. On the other hand, if the British cabinet had held out an assent, and had afterwards retracted, if the demon of darkness should come from the infernal regions upon earth, and throw a fire-brand among the people, he could not do more to promote mischief. The hopes of the public were raised, and in one instant they were blasted. If the house did not resent that insult to the nation and to themselves, they would, in his mind, be most contemptible; for although a majority of the people might submit to have their rights withheld, they would never submit to be mocked in so barefaced a manner. The case was not as formerly, when all the parliament of Ireland was against the catholics, and to back them the force of England. Now, although the claim of the catholics was well known and understood, not one petition controverting it had been presented from protestants in any part of Ireland. No remonstrance appeared; no county meeting had been held. What was to be inferred from all this, but that the sentiments of the protestants were for the emancipation of the catholics? A meeting was held on Saturday last, of the merchants and traders of the metropolis, at the Royal Exchange, which was as numerous as the limits of that building would admit. The governor of the bank of Ireland was

in the chair. An address was resolved on to his excellency, Earl Fitzwilliam, full of affection; and resolutions, strong as they could be, in countenance of the catholic claims. He would ask them, was the British minister to controul all the interest, talents, and inclinations in this country? He protested to God, that in all the history he had read, he had never met with a parallel of such ominous infatuation as that by which he appeared to be led. Let him persevere, and you must increase your army to myriads; every man must have five or six dragoons in his house. The horror of the calamity——Mr. Marcus Beresford moved, that the gallery be cleared.

After a short pause, Sir Laurence resumed, and declared he would speak no longer on the catholic question. He then proceeded to the other objects in contemplation, and attempted to persuade the house to take measures to secure their accomplishment. What will you say, said he, to your constituents? You have voted additional taxes, to the amount of £250,000 a year, and what did you get? Nothing. We have been duped, and we cannot tell by whom. He concluded by moving, “that the words in the money-bill, the 25th of March 1796, be expunged, and the words, 25th of May 1795, be inserted in their room.” Mr. Tighe, jun. seconded the motion. After a long debate this was rejected. They, however, resolved, that his excellency had merited the thanks of the house, and the confidence of the people.

The commencement, conduct, and fatal termination of this administration, were soon disclosed by the letters of earl Fitzwilliam to the earl of Carlisle. In these his lordship states, that the catholic question was not the cause of his recal; and that in the whole proceedings relative to it, he acted agreeable to the original outline settled with his majesty's ministers, previous to his departure from London. Being decidedly of opinion, says this enlightened statesman, that the catholics should be removed from every remaining disqualification; an opinion in which the duke of Portland concurred; I found the cabinet, with Mr. Pitt at their head, strongly impressed with the same conviction. Had I found it otherwise, I never would have undertaken the government. I then proposed that the additional indulgences should be offered from the throne. This was objected to, and it was agreed that the catholic question should not be brought forward by government; but, that should it be pressed by the catholics, lord Fitzwilliam should support it. This the catholics did; and the British ministers were made acquainted with the opinion of lord Fitzwilliam, that the measure of catholic emancipation ought no longer to be deferred, in a fortnight after his arrival. The regular correspondence was continued, in which the dismissals and appointments of the viceroy were discussed; though the catholic question was not glanced at. But after leave was given for bringing in the bill for the relief of the catholics, "came a letter from the secretary of state, touching at length

on this important subject, and bringing it, for the first time, into play, as a question of any doubt or difficulty with the British cabinet: then, as if the question had been started for the first moment between us, as if it never had been the subject of any former consultation, plan, or arrangement whatever, he writes, of enabling the king's ministers to form their judgment, as to the policy, expediency, safety and necessity of that measure: then, as if he had never before heard from me on the subject, he cautions against committing myself by engagements, or even by encouraging language, (so minute is his grace) to give my countenance to the immediate adoption of this measure. Then, for the first time, it appears to have been discovered, that the deferring it would be not merely an expediency, or a thing to be desired for the present, but "the means of doing a greater service to the British empire, than it has been capable of receiving since the revolution, or at least since the union." All former opinions, all former discussions, all former agreements, the leading principle of our being all convinced of the necessity, as well as fitness of the measure taking place at no distant period, of which I reminded the ministers in my letter of the 15th of January, all were forgotten; and he feels it his duty, for the first time, in consequence of the discussion in the cabinet the day before, to exhort me to use those efforts which I had expressed an intention of trying; efforts, of the efficacy of which I had expressed the strongest doubts, on the 8th of January, when I first men-

tioned my intention of trying them; efforts, every hope from which I had relinquished on the 15th, when I warned them of the necessity of immediately giving way, when I earnestly called upon them for peremptory instructions, which if I should not receive I should acquiesce. Efforts, which they knew from the whole series of my correspondence, it was impossible ever to attempt, without evident and certain danger.”*

His excellency immediately wrote to the duke of Portland, expressing his surprise, that, after such an interval, when the various details were transmitted to him, advising him of the hourly necessity of bringing forward the catholic question, and the impolicy and danger of resisting it, he should now be pressed, for the first time, to defer the question till some future occasion. He refused to be the person to run the risk of such a determination; he refused to be the person to raise a flame in the country, that nothing short of arms could be able to extinguish. This was accompanied by a letter to Mr. Pitt, containing a justification of his dismissals, which concluded with his determination to persist in them, and left to Mr. Pitt a choice between his excellency and Mr. Beresford. Shortly afterwards, he received two official letters from the duke of Portland, entering into a detail of the catholic question, and a private letter of his own, in which his grace dwelt particularly on the necessity of information on this measure, and a detailed plan

* Letter to Lord Carlisle.

of all the advantages intended to be conceded to the catholics. He further observed, "that if the consideration of this great question could be deferred till peace was established, he should have no doubt but that it would be attended with advantages, which, perhaps, are not to be hoped for in any other supposeable cause;" but, he added, "that it was surely going too far, to infer from any thing that he said, that I was desired to undertake the task of deferring it to that period. If the cabinet were to accede, what they desired was, to be justified in that accession by a free and impartial investigation of facts, of circumstances and of opinions; among which, as of reason, mine would have the most decisive weight; and as I had expressed a wish to have the mode considered in England, whilst it was still within my reach to have it limited or modified, before the bill was introduced, and before the plan was known to the catholics, he wished to have this plan and the heads of the bill transmitted for consideration."

At the moment of his writing this letter, there was not a fact, a circumstance, or an opinion, that could be transmitted to him, of which his grace was not in possession. He had acknowledged, and frequently referred to his excellency's letter of the 10th of February, in which the plan, wherein every thing that regarded the constitution, the ecclesiastical establishment, and the settlement of property was stated. He had the primate's opinion on some ideas that his grace had suggested; and still more ample details were im-

mediately forwarded ; but for these details, which were to have the most decisive weight, no delay was made. A cabinet meeting decided that the lord lieutenant should be recalled ; and this decision the duke of Portland was made the instrument of communicating.

To the catholic question, however, earl Fitzwilliam by no means attributed his recal ; for, did it require, he says, that this letter should be accompanied, as it was by one from Mr. Pitt, of the same date, accepting, in fact, the alternative I proposed to him, (the dismissal of the Beresford party, or his recal,) declaring himself prepared for the worst, however he might lament it. “ It is true, indeed, that for the very first time, he mentions the catholic business, and declares his concurrence in the general desire of the cabinet, to prevent any further progress being made in Mr. Grattan’s bill, till they should receive and consider the information which they thought it their duty to call for ; but by the desertion of all my friends, and by the prospect of my falling alone, Mr. Pitt was prepared to throw out this, as a matter on which to amuse his colleagues for the moment, and the public at a future period ; while to myself, without allowing a moment’s further deliberation, he boldly and peremptorily pronounces on what I had determined to be the point to decide on my government. On the subject of arrangements, he felt bound to adhere to these sentiments, not only with respect to Mr. Beresford, but to the line of conduct adopted in so many instances towards the former sup-

porters of government; by these sentiments, he must, at all events, be guided, from a regard to the king's service, and to his own honor, however sincerely he might lament the consequences which must arise from the present situation."

The recal of this nobleman was no sooner credited, than an universal despondency seized the nation. Meetings were held throughout the kingdom, in order, if possible, to avert the national calamity. The freemen and freeholders of the city of Dublin, agreed to petition the king, and transmitted it by delegates; the catholics of Dublin did the same. The merchants and traders also, with Mr. Abraham Wilkinson, the then governor of the Bank of Ireland, at their head, expressed their sorrow at the unfortunate event, and their entire concurrence in the removal of all religious disabilities. These remonstrances being too voluminous for insertion, the following may serve as a specimen of the popular feeling on this ominous occasion.

Address of the Catholics of Dublin to the Right Hon. Henry Grattan, on the 27th of February, 1795.

Sir,

We are instructed by the Catholics of Dublin, to offer you their humble tribute of thanks and gratitude, as well for the eminent services you have rendered to this kingdom, on various occasions, as for your able and generous exertions in their cause. It is not easy to do justice to the merits of a man, whose name is connected with the most brilliant events of his time; and who has already obtained the highest of all titles, the Deliverer of his Country. But, though it is impossible to add to your fame, by any terms we can employ, it must be grateful to you to learn, that you have a place,

not only in the admiration, but in the affection of your countrymen.

To be thus loved and admired, is surely an enviable distinction. It may not, perhaps, be sufficient to preserve or purchase station and power, at court, but, to a well-formed mind, it is a source of purer satisfaction, than the favour and protection even of monarchs or their ministers.

Few men have had it in their power to do so much for their native land, as you have done for Ireland. When you first entered into public life, garrison habits, and provincial prejudices, were opposed to Irish interests and feelings; and, what was still more discouraging, the different descriptions of people in this country, far from being ready to meet in a common point for their mutual advantage, were kept asunder by perverse and unintelligible antipathies of a religious nature. Into this chaos of contradictions, you infused your spirit, and brought order, in some measure, out of confusion.

The first effort of your eloquence was, to rouse the Irish parliament to assert its own independence; and, notwithstanding the habits of subjection which particular causes had induced, you were successful.

At present, you are engaged in a pursuit, equally honourable to your head, and still more to your heart. As mover of the Catholic bill, you are endeavouring to inculcate the necessity of moderation and justice, where you before inspired courage; and urging men who triumphed over foreign supremacy, to an act of much greater dignity and difficulty, a sacrifice of the prejudices of their youth and education.

In this work, so full of genius and public spirit, and which goes to the creation of a people, as your former exertions went to the forming of a constitution, you have already made considerable progress; and when you and your illustrious friends were called to the councils of a virtuous viceroy, we looked with confidence to the accomplishment of your patriotic intentions.

Some enemy, however, to the king and the people, has interposed his malignant and wicked suggestions, and endeavoured to throw obstacles in the way of our total emancipation. But we are far from giving way to sentiments of despondency and alarm. We feel the justice of our pretensions,

and we are persuaded, that what is just will prevail over the arts of perfidy and falsehood.

What gives us the most sensible satisfaction is, the general union of sentiment that pervades all ranks and descriptions of Irishmen on the present occasion. Never before did Ireland speak with a voice so unanimous. Protestants and Catholics are at this moment united, and seem to have no other contest, but who shall resent most the outrage that has been offered to Irish pride, in the intended removal of a patriotic viceroy from the government, and you and your friends from the councils of this kingdom.

For our own part, it shall be our study to cultivate an union so happily begun. We have no selfish or narrow views: we do not wish to acquire privileges for ourselves, in order to abridge the privileges of others; for we know, that in matters of liberty and constitution, to give is to gain.

With regard to the men who may have the hardihood to take the situations which you and your friends are about to lay down, if, unfortunately for this country, such an event should happen, we shall only say, that we do not envy them the sensations which they must take up at the same time. That man's temper must be of steel, who can hold up his head amidst the hisses of a betrayed and irritated nation.

As to you and your friends, your departure from power will not disturb the serenity of your minds. The veneration and gratitude of the people will attend you in retirement, and will preserve you from reflections, which must be the portion of those who may be your dismal and melancholy successors.

THOMAS BRAUGHALL, Chairman.
JOHN SWEETMAN, Secretary.

To which Mr. Grattan returned the following answer:

Gentlemen,

In supporting you I support the Protestant; we have but one interest and one honour, and whoever gives privileges to you, gives vigour to all. The Protestant already begins to perceive it; a late attack has rallied the scattered spirits of the country from the folly of religious schism to the recol-

section of national honour, and a nation's feuds are lost in a nation's resentment. Your emancipation will pass—rely on it, your emancipation must pass—it may be death to one viceroy; it will be the peace-offering of another, and the laurel may be torn from the dead brow of one governor to be craftily converted into the olive of his successor.

Let me advise you by no means to postpone the consideration of your fortunes till after the war; rather let Britain receive the benefit of your zeal during the exigency which demands it, and you yourselves, while you are fighting to preserve the blessings of a constitution, have really and bona fide those blessings.

My wish is, that you should be free *now*. There is no other policy that is not low and little; let us at once instantly embrace, and greatly emancipate.

On this principle I mean to introduce your bill, with your permission, immediately after the recess.

You are pleased to speak of the confidence and power, with which, for a moment, I was supposed to have been possessed.

When his Majesty's ministers were pleased to resort to our support, they took us with the incumbrance of our reputation, and with all our debts and mortgages which we owed to our country.

To have accepted a share of confidence and council without a view to private advantage, will not meet, I hope, with the disapprobation of my country; but to have accepted that share without any view to public advantage, would have been refinement on the folly of ambition. Measures, therefore, public measures and arrangements, and that which is now disputed, were stipulated by us, were promised in one quarter, and, with assurances, they were not resisted in another.

In the service of government, under his excellency's administration, we directed our attention to two great objects, the kingdom and the empire. We obtained certain beneficial laws, the discovery and reformation of certain abuses, and were in progress to reform more; we obtained a great force, and a great supply, with the consent and confidence of the people. These were not the measures of courtiers; they were the measures of ministers.

His excellency Lord Fitzwilliam may boast, that he offered

to the empire the affections of millions; a better aid to the war than his enemies can furnish, who have forfeited those affections, and put themselves in their place.

So decidedly have the measures of Ireland served the empire, that those who were concerned in them might appeal from the cabals of the British cabinet to the sense of the British nation. I know of no cause afforded for the displeasure of the British cabinet; but if services done to Ireland are crimes, which cannot be atoned for by exertions for the empire, I must lament the gloomy prospect for both kingdoms, and receive a discharge from the service of government as the only honour an English minister can confer on an Irish subject.

I conceive the continuance of Lord Fitzwilliam as necessary for the prosperity of this kingdom. His firm integrity is formed to correct, his mild manners to reconcile, and his private example to discountenance a progress of vulgar and rapid pollution. If he is to retire, I condole with my country; for myself, on that occasion the pangs I should feel on rendering up my small portion of ministerial breath would be little, were it not for the gloomy prospects afforded by those *dreadful* guardians, who are likely to succeed. I tremble at the return to power of your old task-masters; that combination which galled the country with its tyranny, insulted her by its manners, exhausted her by its rapacity, and slandered her by its malice: should such a combination, (at once inflamed as it must be now by the favour of the British court, and by the reprobation of the Irish people,) return to power, I have no hesitation to say, that *they will extinguish Ireland, or Ireland must remove them*. It is not your case only, but that of the nation; I find the country already committed in the struggle; I beg to be committed along with her, and to abide the issue of her fortunes.

I should have expected that there had been a wisdom and faith in some quarter of another country that would have prevented such catastrophe; but I know it is no proof of that wisdom, to take the taxes, continue the abuses, damp the zeal, and dash away the affection of so important a member of the empire as the people of Ireland; and when this country came forward, cordial and confident, with the offering of her treasure and blood, and resolute to stand or

fall with the British nation, it is; I say, no proof of wisdom nor generosity to select that moment to plant a dagger in her heart.

But whatsoever shall be the event, I will adhere to her interests to the last moment of my life.

HENRY GRATTAN.

Pitt's scheme for a union was discerned at this time from the printed correspondence between Earls Fitzwilliam and Carlisle. The catholics of Dublin, at a meeting held in Francis-street chapel, on the 9th of April, to receive the report of the delegates who presented their address to his Majesty, lamented the recal of their favourite viceroy, and loudly protested against the projected union. A passage from the correspondence above alluded to being read, to the following effect: "Then, for the first time, it appears to have been discerned, that the deferring the catholic question would be, not merely an expedient, or a thing to be desired for the present, but the means of doing a greater service to the British empire than it has been capable of receiving since the Revolution, or at least since the Union!" And also another passage, "That if the consideration of this question could be deferred until the peace was established, his Grace should have no doubt but that it would be attended with advantages, which, perhaps, are not to be hoped for in any other supposeable case." It appearing that those expressions, supposed to be those of a personage in a high official station, can admit of no import or meaning, other than that of a meditated Union between this country and Great Britain:

Resolved unanimously, That we are sincerely

and unalterably attached to the rights, liberties, and independence of our native country; and we pledge ourselves, collectively and individually to resist, even our own emancipation, if proposed to be conceded upon the ignominious terms of an acquiescence in the fatal measure of an Union with the sister kingdom.

Resolved unanimously, That while we make this undisguised declaration of our sentiments, in order to satisfy the public mind, we are of opinion, that a measure so full of violence and ruin will never be hazarded; convinced as we are, that no set of men will arrogate to themselves a power which is contrary to the ends and purposes of all governments, a power to surrender the liberties of their country, and to seal the slavery of future generations.

This meeting of the catholics was attended with a remarkable circumstance, peculiarly characteristic of the public feeling. Addresses of congratulation are invariably presented to every viceroy, on his arrival, by the university of Dublin. This day was appointed for presenting that to lord Camden. When the procession had reached the Castle gate, the students, with one consent, broke off, leaving the provost and fellows to make what appearance before his excellency they might think fit, and turned into a coffee-house, where they prepared the following address to Mr. Grattan. This they presented directly, and then repaired in a body to Francis-street chapel. They entered while Mr. Keogh was speaking, who instantly seized the incident,

and hallowed the omen. They were received with the most marked respect and affection, the catholics taking that opportunity of showing, that the language of union and brotherly love, which they were uttering, only expressed the sentiment nearest their hearts.

To the Right Hon. Henry Grattan.

We, the Students of the University of Dublin, entering with the warmest sympathy into the universal feeling and interest of our countrymen, beg leave to unite our voice with theirs in declaring our admiration of your great and uncommon talents, and a reliance on your steady patriotism and unshaken integrity. We have with sorrow beheld the removal of a beloved viceroy, whose arrival we regarded as the promise of public reform, and his presence the pledge of general tranquillity.

If this event should be accompanied (as we have reason to apprehend) by your removal from his majesty's councils in this kingdom, our regret will have received the last additional circumstance of aggravation, and our despondency will be complete. Relying, however, on the wisdom and benignity of his majesty, we yet entertain a hope, that the nation will not be deprived of the salutary measures flowing from your councils and advice, and that the harmony and strength of Ireland will be founded on the solid basis of Catholic emancipation, and the reform of those grievances which have inflamed public indignation.

We therefore intreat you to persevere in exerting the full energy of your splendid talents for the attainment of those objects, which the present alarming posture of affairs, and the consenting wishes of the nation, so loudly demand.

THOMAS MOOR, Chairman.
W. H. ELLIS, Secretary.

Mr. Grattan's Answer.

Ingenuous young Men, for this effusion of the heart I owe you more than ordinary gratitude, and am proud to sympathize in your native, honest, and unadulterated impressions.

I receive your address as the offering of the young year, better garland than the artificial honours of a court: it is the work of disinterested hands, and the present of uncontaminated hearts. May that ardour, which glows in your breasts, long exist, and may the sentiments, which you breathe, long prevail; they are founded in principle, enlightened by letters, and supported by spirit.

The subjects which you mention and recommend I feel and shall pursue.

I lament the recal of a patriot viceroy. Assisted by men much abler than myself, the reform of that system you condemn, I shall not fail to attempt, bound, as I now am, to the rising as well as the passing age, and happy as I shall be, to go on in the service of both.

I join in your fullest wishes for the Catholics, and I feel the important service, which you now render them, by marking in their favour the sentiments of the rising generation, doing, at the same time, so much honour to yourselves, when you give, I had almost said, your first vote in favour of your country.

I am bound to your university by every tie of affection and duty. The sentiments of your address give me a new and just opportunity of saying to her, through you, "*Esto Perpetua*," thou seat of science, and mother of virtue.

I am, with the sincerest regard,

Your most humble servant,

HENRY GRATAN.

On the 25th of March lord Fitzwilliam took his departure from Ireland, when the grief and indignation of the people were most strongly marked. It was a day of general gloom: the shops were shut, and the whole city in mourning. The lord-primate and the lord chancellor were sworn lords-justices, and held the reins of government till the 31st, when earl Camden arrived, and assumed the vice-regency.

The contrast that soon after appeared in the

public papers, between the administrations of lords Westmoreland and Fitzwilliam, are interesting, inasmuch as they lead to the detection of Pitt's treacherous duplicity.

Lord Westmoreland's administration.—Session 1st. Sale of peerages; creation of fourteen new parliamentary places to buy the members. Attack on the rights of the corporation of Dublin. Protection to the abuses of the police. Rejection of place bill, pension bill, responsibility bill, and revenue officers bill.

Session 2d. Evasion of plan proposed to encourage the brewery, and discourage the excessive use of spirits. Resistance to an East India trade. Protection of the abuses of the police. A rejection of the above bill, and defence of flats.

Session 3d. Rejection of the catholic petition. Instruction to the grand juries to enter into resolutions against the catholic franchise. Defence of the abuses of police, and rejection of the above bills.

Session 4th. Gunpowder bill, convention bill, and protection of the abuses of the police. On the other hand, the pension bill, and, in an imperfect shape, the place bill of the opposition at last adopted; together with another measure of the opposition, a relief, but a partial one, to the catholics. The East India trade given up for a more ample possession of the West. All the regular army sent out of the kingdom. A Treasury board established in expence, but not in power nor utility.

Session 5th. Recommendation to the bishop of

Cloyne to the provost, who was to have been also bishop of Ossory, and to have had two boroughs for the use of government. Plundered of every great reversion in the country. Breach of law by the illegal expenditure of money without account or authority. Leaving the country without an army or arms; and that most scandalous and swindling business, the new regiments.

Lord Fitzwilliam's administration of six weeks. Hearth-money taken off the poor. Excise taken off the beer and ale. All restrictions, pains and penalties, taken off the trade of a brewer. Check given to the excessive use of spirituous liquors. Responsibility in the expenditure of public money established. Abuses of the police abolished. Inquiry into the expences of collecting the revenue permitted. Forty-three thousand men proposed for the defence of the kingdom. Roman catholic emancipation propounded. The oppressive office of first commissioner of the revenue abolished. The primacy rescued from a monopolizing brood of jobbers, and given to learning and piety. The college rescued from a stranger, an intruder, and a jobber, and committed to the care of one of its own body.

The despotism of clerks deposed, and the triumph of vice in private as well as in public, interrupted.

For the crown they got a greater body of force than ever was before granted, and a greater supply than formerly. After all done in favour of trade and the poor, yet on a calculation it appeared they raised the revenue £200,000 per an.

This contrast is strong enough, but a reflecting reader may notice, that the merits or demerits of the two administrations, are not so much imputable to the two noblemen, as to the different instructions they acted by. The only imputation to them lies in a reasonable supposition, that the character of each was congenial with the plan of his orders and government.

If it be asked, wherefore the premier encouraged by his agents in the castle, a stern opposition to catholic claims in parliament, supported by the resolutions of corporations and grand juries, sturdy lives and fortunes men, and afterwards gave the catholics a temporary fallacious gleam of halcyon days, soon closed by mortifying disappointments. He wished to widen the breach between the adverse partizans of ascendancy and emancipation. He succeeded in this wish, and, in inflaming the opposition between the two parties in the legislature. Lord Fitzwilliam undoubtedly acted agreeably to the powers entrusted to him, in turning out of office the veteran hacks of the government party. Hereupon the whole phalanx of corruption took the alarm, and keenly applied for redress to their usual employers. Pitt having humbled that unpopular party, by showing them he could rule Ireland without them, and confer pre-eminence on their adversaries, thus humbled to his views, and implacably hostile to the catholics and the patriots in parliament, whose joint influence had turned them out, and threatened the downfall of their whole party, they rushed headlong to exe-

cute whatever orders were transmitted to them. Thus he agitated, irritated, and committed the contending parties, religious and political, with increasing animosity. He had one thing to whisper to the patrons of ascendancy; another and opposite he spoke to the delegates of the catholic convention; back again to the protestant, and again to the catholic; until he set them together by the ears: these were among the means he employed to lead Ireland gradually to that provincial state, long planned by English statesmen. According to the fore-mentioned letter, deferring the catholic question would be the means of doing a greater service to the British empire, than it has been capable of receiving since the revolution, or at least since the union!!! And the other passage, if the consideration of this question could be deferred until peace was established, his grace should have no doubt but it would be attended with advantages, which are not to be hoped for in any other supposable case. No other intelligible meaning can be extracted from these two passages, but the legislative union, since accomplished. For why should deferring catholic emancipation be necessary for attaining to Britain so great an advantage, as great at least as the union with Scotland? The advantage must be gained over Ireland, through her divisions and agitations, to which deferring, after promising emancipation, would necessarily supply fuel. On the other hand, possession of equal rights would greatly tend to produce unanimity in the land. For when neither party pos-

essed ascendancy, any rights to withhold or claim from the other, their agitations would subside into internal calm. Now as the human mind cannot totally stagnate, but must be moved by the opposite springs of hope and fear, salutary while moderate, the different factions, finding no aliment for mental exertion in pretensions extinguished by justice, would turn the activity of their minds on the greater concerns of national importance. They would see, they had a common interest, as well as a common country; common grievances to redress, common rights to demand, and common injuries to repel. Therefore it is, that the real enemies of Ireland, have always opposed the restoration of catholics to their rights; and, for the same reason, the recal of Fitzwilliam, and the delay of the emancipation, until the great advantage was obtained over Ireland, equal in magnitude to the revolution, or the union with Scotland. It was unanimity obtained great advantages to Ireland, during the American war: it was, shortly afterwards, by driving them to the contrary course of strife, division, and civil war, to despoil them not only of their acquisitions, but of legislative power, that no saucy demand of rights should ever again be made. The incorporate union was here manifestly alluded to; equally so in the second passage, why it was expedient to defer emancipation, i. e. to prolong the divisions of the Irish, until the establishment of peace, for the sake of gaining the great advantage. The English cabinet entertained little doubt of the conquest, or at least of

the humiliation or crippling of France, in such sort that she might no longer be able to interfere in the disputes of Britain with any of her dependencies or colonies. In such an event, she might with ease and safety obtain the great advantage. During the attempt it was thought hazardous; consequently, it was such a measure as might provoke national resistance, and therefore the union. Certainly, had not the fleets of France been greatly disabled, the experiment might have proved hazardous, even with the assistance of an Irish rebellion.

END OF VOL. IV.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed

NON-RENEWABLE

JAN 19 2000

ILL-CFI

DUE 2 WKS FROM DATE RECEIVED

UCLA URL/ILL

REC'D YRL FEB 15 '00

NON-RENEWABLE

APR 14 2000

ILL/CFI

DUE 2 WKS FROM DATE RECEIVED

UCLA URL/ILL

REC'D YRL MAY 10 '00

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

A
10 [Taaffe] -
lli An impartial
. 4 history of
Ireland.

OCT 2 1950 Bindery

DA
910
Tlli
v.4

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 001 238 831 0

